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France thanks King for Morillon's honour

AMMAN (Petra) — His Majesty King Hussein Sunday received a cable from French President Francois Mitterrand thanking him for his gesture of supporting French General Philippe Morillon's services to the people of Bosnia-Herzegovina. King Hussein recently sent a telegram to Mr. Mitterrand thanking him for France's role in U.N. operations in Bosnia and asking him to present Jordan's Al Kawkab Medal of the First Order to General Morillon. Mr. Mitterrand said in his cable that the King's gesture would contribute to bolstering friendship relations between the Jordanian and French peoples. King Hussein wrote Mr. Mitterrand that the bestowing of the medal was "in recognition of the courageous personal contribution and principled stand of General Philippe Morillon in upholding the principle that aggression cannot stand in bringing to the world the torment and suffering of the people in Bosnia-Herzegovina and most vividly in Srebrenica." Gen. Morillon set up headquarters more than two weeks ago in the Muslim town of Srebrenica, under siege by Serb forces, and vowed not to leave until U.N. aid got through in the town's inhabitants.

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No final decision on peace talks at Damascus meeting

Picture will be clear after further Arab-U.S. talks, Abu Jaber reports

Combined agency dispatches
THE FOUR Arab parties involved in peace talks with Israel Sunday appeared to be open to keep their options open without announcing a definite agreement to attend the next round negotiations with the Jewish state in Washington April 20.
Foreign Ministers of Jordan, Syria and Lebanon and the head of the Political Department of the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) were joined by Egyptian Foreign Minister Amr Musa for talks in Damascus on the peace process Sunday.
The talks, which continue Monday, revolved around ways and means to resolve the crisis sparked by Israel's Dec. 17 expulsion of over 400 Palestinians to South Lebanon and how to come up with a collective response to the U.S.-Russian invitation to the ninth round of peace talks with Israel.
Kamel Abu Jaber of Jordan was quoted as saying that the meeting had opted to leave the issue of attendance in the talks open.
"The image is not clear yet," he was quoted as saying by the Jordan News Agency, Petra. "There are meetings between U.S. Secretary of State (Warren) Christopher and there are Arab delegations which will participate in similar meetings in Washington. Therefore we left the Damascus meeting open, to that no decision be taken at the moment."



A general view of the Damascus meeting Sunday of Arab parties involved in peace talks with Israel (AFP photo)

Yeltsin, Khasbulatov survive congress fury over deal

President, speaker escape attempt to remove both of them, but basic crisis unresolved



Russian President Boris Yeltsin, accompanied by government ministers, talks to people in the street in a bid to secure popular support in a Kremlin power struggle (AFP photo)

MOSCOW (Agencies) — President Boris Yeltsin and his chief political rival both survived attempts Sunday by the Russian congress to remove them from office.
But the secret ballot by the Congress of People's Deputies left the country's political crisis unresolved after a dramatic day of unexpected compromise and huge street rallies.
The parliament's electoral commission announced that 617 legislators voted for Mr. Yeltsin's ouster, well short of the 689 votes, or two-thirds of the congress, needed to remove him.
Only 268 deputies voted against impeachment.
The results also showed that Parliamentary Chairman Ruslan Khasbulatov survived an attempt by congress to sack him.
A total of 339 deputies voted to dismiss Mr. Khasbulatov, short of the 517 needed to force his resignation, and 550 supported him.
Congress earlier voted to try to get rid of both men in a furious reaction to a compromise agreement by the two arch rivals which would have called early elections and abolished the legislature.
The compromise enraged the legislators because it would have eliminated the congress — and their jobs — in favour of a smaller, bicameral legislature.
After casting his ballot, Mr. Khasbulatov told reporters that he had voted for his own dismissal. "I crossed myself out," he said, referring to the Russian voting practice in which voters strike out the names of candidates they do not want.
Mr. Khasbulatov did not explain his remark.
Mr. Yeltsin told a crowd of about 50,000 supporters who rallied outside the Kremlin that he would not step down, even if the congress voted to oust him.
"I will not obey," Mr. Yeltsin said before the vote took place. "I will obey only the will of the people," he said, raising a clen-

Settler stabbed to death in Gaza

Gaza sealed off

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM (Agencies) — An Israeli settler was stabbed to death Sunday as he was building a house in a Jewish settlement in the occupied Gaza Strip, the army and residents said.
The killing, the latest in a wave of Arab-Israeli violence, brought demands by settlers for strong steps against Palestinians in Gaza. But Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin urged Israelis not to be swayed from the path of peace.
"We have to support the way we are headed, despite the pain of terror," Mr. Rabin told members of his Labour Party.
Palestinian workers found Sunday's victim, Yehuda Gawi, 49, stabbed to death in the settlement of Nisanit at the northern end of the Gaza Strip, said Haim Trabelsi, the settlement secretary.
Two workers stabbed Gawi, stole his gun and fled towards the nearby town of Beit Hanoun, Israel Radio reported. The army confirmed the death but said it had no details.
Gawi was from the town of Ashkelon, just north of the Gaza Strip, the radio said.
After the slaying, about 200 Jewish settlers blocked a road near the settlement, burned tyres and threw stones at cars carrying Palestinian workers huck from jobs in Israel, Arab reports said.
Gawi was the fifth Israeli killed in the Gaza Strip this month. A total of 10 Israelis and 24 Palestinians have been slain during the month in Israel and the occupied territories.

(Continued on page 3)

French rightists rout Socialists

PARIS (Agencies) — France's conservative opposition completed a general election rout of the ruling Socialists on Sunday and was set to win an unprecedented 482 of the 577 National Assembly seats, reliable computer forecasts said.
Opposition leader Jacques Chirac, claiming victory for his centre-right alliance, pledged that the new French government would show tolerance towards all voters.
The government ... will be the government of all French people, which must act with firmness, moderation and tolerance," Mr. Chirac said in a televised statement.
Mr. Chirac spoke after Socialist leader Laurent Fabius conceded defeat.
The left has suffered a very severe defeat. The right dominates more or less everything," Mr. Fabius said in a televised statement after learning he had won back his seat in the Paris suburbs.
It will take time to recover. New ideas, new behaviour what we need is a sea change which concerns everyone on the left," he added.
In a call echoing the "big bang" idea urged by his Socialist rival Michel Rocard, he said different to the five suspects being held in connection with the case.
"We've been told that it is authentic," Suzanne Trassoff, a spokeswoman for the New York City police department, told Reuters.
The letter warned more attacks would follow unless the United States ended diplomatic relations with Israel, halted aid to the Jewish state, and did not interfere in the internal affairs of Middle Eastern countries.
The newspaper said government officials had never heard of the group named in the letter, and reported that research had turned up no previous references to any organisation by that name.
The brother of Mahmoud Abu Halima, who police say was the mastermind of the plot, told Reuters late Saturday he was unfamiliar with the organisation named in the letter.
"I never heard of it," Mohammad Abu Halima said in a telephone interview.
The letter, in English, said (exact text): "We are, the Fifth Battalion, in the Liberation Army, declare our responsibility for the explosion on the mentioned building. This action was done in response for the American political, economic and military support to Israel, the state of terrorism and to the rest of the

(Continued on page 3)

House inquiry panel asked to probe civil service 'violations'

By Ayman Al Safadi
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — The Lower House of Parliament Sunday asked its Investigations Committee to probe allegations of illegal employment practices in ministries and other government departments for possible indictments of officials responsible for what some deputies called crimes against society.
The allegations were included in a report by a special panel that was set up by the House to investigate alleged nepotism in civil-service appointments. The report, which was presented to the House last Sunday, claimed that in the last three years, 1,334 positions at 13 ministries and government departments were filled through illegal procedures.
The House asked the Investigations Committee to provide it with a report of its findings, but it was not clear how this could be achieved since the House will end its last ordinary session on March 31 and officials have ruled out the convening of an extra-ordinary session.
And even though the majority of the 30 deputies who spoke on the issue Sunday demanded that the perpetrators of the alleged "constitutional violations" be sent to court, the committee will not be able to indict any minister since the indictment of former and present cabinet members has to be endorsed by a two-third majority vote in the House.
The decision to refer the case to the Investigations Committee, however, put the lid on a controversial issue that had deputies accusing government ministers and officials as well as each other of favouritism, nepotism and unfairness in awarding work opportunities to job seekers.
Deputies said that the alleged nepotism in government hiring is a "danger that can increase the social threat of poverty and unemployment" and is a practice that makes a mockery of the government's administrative reform programme.
"(Unfairness in government appointments) throws strong doubts about the seriousness of the administrative reform programme and constitutes a violation of the Constitution," Muslim Brotherhood Deputy Hamzeh Mansour said. "Nepotism has become the rule and not the exception."
Holding the present cabinet and its predecessors responsible for what Deputy Fawzi Tuameh called "a dangerous phenomenon that has to be stopped," deputies

(Continued on page 5)

Contradictions, bitter rivalry mar PLO-Hamas quest for better ties

By Mariam M. Shahin
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — After months of dialogue, the relationship between the Palestine Liberation Organisation and the Islamic Resistance Movement (Hamas) appears to be undergoing a metamorphosis.
While the PLO has consistently backed the U.S.-led peace talks, Hamas has consistently condemned the process as a sell-out and given the impression that it would not accept a Palestinian state or entity in anything less than pre-1948 Palestine.
Hamas has no political or military programme to back it up its hardline stand. On fact talk of its jihad in the larger sense of the word is an unrealistic goal, observers say.
Civil disobedience in the occupied territories which is increasingly taking lives on both sides of the Palestinian-Israeli divide is the maximum "military" assault that the Palestinians are able to launch against Israel, the observers say.
"While the type of anti-occupation activity currently taking place in the occupied territories may be enough to want to make the Israelis withdraw, it is by no means a war on the traditional sense," said a European diplomat who travels to the West Bank frequently.
"The Israelis could declare war on the Palestinians and effectively kill thousands, and the Palestinians know this," said the diplomat. "Neither the Israelis nor the Palestinians favour such an option because if the Israelis did this it would become an endless war and every Palestinian would become a time-bomb for Israel. For the Palestinians it would mean a commitment to never-ending warfare because militarily they can only weaken and intimidate the Israelis but never defeat them. Israel has the weapons after all."
At this stage, Hamas and its coalition partners, the 10 mostly left-wing groups based in Damascus, can make life more difficult for all in the occupied territories, but they cannot win a military victory, said the diplomat who spoke to the Jordan Times on condition of anonymity.
Sources close to Hamas say that the group is fully aware of their military limitations and that a military victory is not the

(Continued on page 5)

U.S. ponders how to push democracy in Mideast

Perhaps the most encouraging model from Washington's point of view is Jordan

By Alan Elsner
Reuters

WASHINGTON — The Clinton administration is grappling with the dilemma of how to apply its passion for democracy and human rights to the troubled Middle East.
President Bill Clinton came to power accusing his predecessor, George Bush, of coddling dictators around the world and promising he would not do the same.
His Secretary of State Warren Christopher has spoken frequently of the importance he attaches to human rights and has nominated former Colorado Senator Tim Wirth to fill a newly created post with global responsibility for advancing democracy and human rights.
Yet when it comes to the Middle East, this policy runs into a dilemma: Most, if not all of Washington's key Arab allies, including Egypt and Saudi Arabia, are non-democratic and are threatened by Islamic fundamentalists hostile both to U.S. interests and Western values.
The policy emerging in the State Department seems to be to try to nudge Arab leaders to take slow, cautious steps to the direction of political and economic reform in the hope of heading off a perceived Islamic threat.
"This administration gives a very high priority to human rights and democratisation and we tell our friends that the word 'stability' is not a static phrase that just means security in the military or police sense," said one senior U.S. official, who did not want to be named.
"Stability in its true sense is also equated with social justice," he said.
"To the extent that these societies can elaborate their policies both towards more political participation and on privatisation, we think in the long term the issues of social justice can be much more effectively dealt with and true stability can come into being."
But that's easier said than done. Washington has two scary models before its eyes when surveying the region. First is Iran where a pro-American authoritarian leader was swept away by an Islamic government seen here as a threat to U.S. interests throughout the region.
Second is Algeria, where the army stepped in at the last minute to prevent Islamic radicals winning power in an election. Now, the military-backed government is engaged in a tough day-to-day struggle against unrest and mounting economic difficulties with the Islamic "threat" far from extinguished.
The problem with allowing fundamentalists to win office through elections is that once in power there is no certainty they would ever give it up, officials say.
"The principal position of every major fundamentalist thinker is that democracy is opposed to Islam and that Islam is superior," said Martin Kramer, an Israeli Arabist from the Dayan Centre in Tel Aviv.
"Once established in power, they would be duty-bound to preserve the Islamic state. One does not vote for or against God. One obeys Him," he said.
Against this, Graham Fuller of the Rand Corporation argues that current Middle East governments are untenable and Islamic forces are bound to gain power. The United States should prepare for this rather than seeking to avert it.
"Something is going to give fairly soon in many countries in the Middle East. As democracy comes to the region, it will be almost universally destabilising," he said.
"But what is the alternative? We must get through the process," said Mr. Fuller at a recent debate at the Washington Institute for Near East Policy.
According to this theory, the only way to combat fundamentalism is to bring it into the system, where it will weaken over time.
"Let the Muslim fundamentalist take over the cities. Let people see how they run them. We need the phased introduction of democracy," said Mr. Fuller.
Perhaps the most encouraging model from Washington's viewpoint is in Jordan, where King Hussein has allowed Islamic parties to win a substantial share of seats in a national assembly and is moving towards free party elections.
"It's working. It's difficult but it's a policy of inclusion," said the U.S. official of the Jordanian experiment.

(Continued on page 3)

Iran slams Algeria's decision to cut ties

NICOSIA (Agencies) — Iran branded Algeria's cutting of diplomatic ties with Tehran an irrational decision and said Sunday it was designed to divert attention from internal troubles.

"The decision has been taken on the basis of a false and hasty analysis of the internal situation in Algeria," Iran's IRNA news agency quoted Foreign Ministry spokesman Morteza Sarmadi as saying.

The Algerian presidency said Saturday it was breaking ties with Tehran, accusing it of interfering in Algeria's internal affairs and supporting Muslim fundamentalists locked in a bloody struggle against military-backed rulers.

"The Algerian government, in a bid to mislead the public opinion from realities and to cover up unstable circumstances as well as the internal instability stemming from overlooking the votes and views of the people of that country, has always tried to attribute its internal troubles to overseas," Mr. Sarmadi said.

Iran's relations with Algeria soured after military-backed rulers took over in Algeria in January 1992 and cancelled general elections which Muslim militants were poised to win.

Iran denounced the move as a Western-inspired plan to thwart Muslims' progress through the ballot box and condemned the subsequent crackdown on Muslim fundamentalist groups.

But it has repeatedly denied

Algeria's accusing that it interfered in its internal affairs.

Mr. Sarmadi said Algerians were a "Muslim and heroic people" who wanted to tread an independent path. "The only way to come out of the present difficulties is (for the Algerian government) to respect the votes and views of the nation," he said.

Algers recalled its ambassador to Tehran in January 1992 and reduced links with Iran to a symbolic level last November.

IRNA said Iran's caretaker diplomat at its Algerian embassy was summoned to the Algerian Foreign Ministry Saturday to be informed of the decision to sever diplomatic ties. He and two other embassy staff were given 72 hours to leave, it said.

Algeria is the second African country to cut diplomatic ties with Iran this month.

Zambia severed relations with Iran and Iraq on March 11, accusing them of involvement in an alleged opposition coup attempt. Tehran denied the charge and said Lusaka's decision was inspired by foreign powers.

The Algerian decision to break ties with Iran followed nationwide marches early this week condemning "terrorism," during which marchers chanted "neither Tehran, nor Khartoum — (an) Algerian Algeria."

The presidency, in a statement carried by the official news agency APS, said:

"Analysing the international situation and particularly the interference of certain countries in Algeria's internal affairs, as well as their declared support for terrorism, the high Committee of State (HCE) has decided to break diplomatic relations with Iran and recall our ambassador to Sudan."

Algeria terms as "terrorists" the armed fundamentalist groups blamed for killing more than 600 people in the past year.

State television later quoted a Foreign Ministry spokesman as saying: "This decision comes after the multiplication of actions showing the intervention of official Iranian milieu in the internal affairs of Algeria."

The aims of this policy "were not only to destabilise Algeria but the whole of the Muslim world and to undermine the image of Islam in the world," APS quoted him as saying.

Egypt, battling fundamentalist attacks which have hit its key tourist industry, has also accused Tehran of trying to export "Islamic revolution," with Sudan acting as surrogate.

The Algerian ministry spokesman was quoted as saying its ambassador in Khartoum was being recalled "because of the support of this country to terrorist activities."

Algers recalled its ambassador to Tehran after what the Foreign Ministry, quoted by APS, termed a "virulent press campaign" in

Police suppressed findings showing Netanyahu charges were baseless

TEL AVIV (AP) — Israel's police chief suppressed conclusions of an investigation into charges made by Likud opposition party leader Binyamin Netanyahu against a rival, helping Mr. Netanyahu win the leadership, Israel Television reported Saturday.

Mr. Netanyahu charged in January that "a senior Likud figure surrounded by mafia types" attempted to blackmail his wife with information about an extramarital affair.

At the time, the telegenic Netanyahu told a startled Israel he would foil his rival's plan by coming clean about his adultery

Renewed fighting reported between rebel groups in Sudan

NAIROBI (Agencies) — Two rival factions of the fragmented Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA) rebel movement have clashed in Kongor, southern Sudan, one of the groups reported Sunday.

A statement from the Nasir faction, which broke away from SPLA founder John Garang's mainstream group last year, said a Garang group led by Dior Ajang attacked rival forces early Saturday.

There was heavy fighting but the statement gave no report of casualties.

The Nasir group accused Colonel Garang of using the respite

Egypt risks Islamic backlash from surrendering bombing suspect

By William C. Mann
The Associated Press

CAIRO — Egypt's government risks an Islamic backlash for letting American agents take an Egyptian suspect to New York to face charges in the World Trade Centre bombing.

"People are going to start wondering why he was turned in," lawyer Abdul Halim Manboush said Thursday. "It could spark a strong reaction among the people."

Mr. Manboush represents Sheikh Omar Abdul Rahman, a hardline Egyptian cleric. The U.S. government has linked his followers with the Feb. 26 bombing that killed six people and injured more than 1,000.

Tensions between the government and Muslim extremists are high throughout Egypt.

On Thursday, police stormed an alleged hideout in Ahi Tigi, just outside the fundamentalist stronghold of Assiut, 320 kilometres south of Cairo. Police said a militant was killed and two policemen wounded in the shootout.

U.S. officials have identified Mahmoud Abu Halima, 33, as a prime suspect in the trade centre bombing. He was spotted out of Egypt on Wednesday in a U.S.-chartered jet under still unexplained circumstances.

After a 24-hour silence, Egypt said Thursday it did not stand in the way when Mr. Abu Halima, identified by the Egyptian government as an American, volunteered to accompany American agents back to the United States.

But Hosni Nagdi, a Muslim extremist on the run from the authorities, said the "Egyptian regime is totally submissive to the United States."

"Egypti surrendered him immediately, without even caring about how the Egyptian people feel about it," he said in an interview with the Associated Press.

Such emotions illustrate the sensitivity of Egypt's position. The strongest Arab ally of the United States, Egypt faces a surge in violence by Islamic extremists trying to overthrow President Hosni Mubarak's secular government and install a religious state.

Mr. Manboush compared the current crisis to that involving Libya, which is shielding two men accused of bombing Pan Am flight 103 over Lockerbie, Scotland, in 1980. By refusing to surrender the alleged government agents for trial in Libya, incurred sanctions from the United Nations that have cost it billions of dollars.

"The Egyptian government doesn't want to enter a problem like Lockerbie and have

sanctions imposed on it," Mr. Manboush said. "The government turned him in because it is afraid of America. It does not want to be accused of harbouring terrorists."

The Egyptian government denied for days that Mr. Abu Halima had entered Egypt, but all along he was in custody.

In explaining why Egypt allowed him to accompany the American agents, the Interior Ministry said Thursday that Mr. Abu Halima is an American and volunteered to return to his adopted homeland.

Under Egyptian law, a person born in the country cannot renounce his citizenship. Interpretations vary over whether an Egyptian can be extradited. At any rate, the only extradition treaty with the United States dates from 1874, when Egypt was part of the now-defunct Ottoman empire. It never has been tested.

In Washington, Vern Jervis, spokesman for the Immigration and Nationalisation Service, denied that Mr. Abu Halima has American citizenship. Mr. Jervis said he entered the United States on a German passport and is considered an Egyptian on the list of permanent residents.

Mr. Abu Halima is married to a German and has three sons and a daughter. The family accompanied him to his parents' house in Kafr Al Diwar,

MIDDLE EAST NEWS IN BRIEF

Iraq to attend Arab ministers meeting

BAGHDAD (R) — Iraq is to attend an Arab foreign ministers meeting scheduled for April 18, in Cairo, the ruling Baath Party newspaper reported Sunday. "Iraq will participate in the ministerial meeting of the Arab League Council to be held at Arab foreign ministers level," the newspaper said. Al Thawra, quoting an authorised source, said Iraq's Foreign Minister Mohammad Saeed Al Sahaf will head the Iraqi delegation.

Obesity increasing in Kuwait, officials say

KUWAIT (R) — Obesity is on the rise in Kuwait and already affects half the adult population, a Health Ministry official said in remarks published Sunday. Zamzam Al Mosa, secretary-general for food affairs at the Ministry of Public Health, said 49 per cent of adult men residents and 59 per cent of adult women residents currently suffered from various stages of overweight, the Arab Times reported. He gave no breakdown by nationality of the incidence among the 1.3 million population, which comprised an estimated 620,000 Kuwaiti citizens and up to 700,000 foreigners and stateless Arabs. The incidence of obesity ranged between 10 to 27 per cent among various categories of students aged from six to 17, the English-language newspaper quoted him as saying. Mr. Mosa gave no comparative figures for previous periods.

Moroccan election delay confirmed

RABAT (R) — King Hassan II announced Saturday that Morocco's parliamentary elections would be postponed eight weeks to June 25. Confirming a delay already reported in the news media, he said the postponement was necessary to allow electoral rolls to be brought up to date, to print documents and ballots, and for other practical reasons. The election, the first parliamentary vote for eight years, had been scheduled on April 30. The king spoke at a traditional ceremony before hundreds of officials after the feast of 'Eid Al Fitr. He said the elections, which he has promised will be fair and honest, would be "a mirror to reflect the true image of Moroccan citizens."

Morocco plans public works in drought areas

RABAT (R) — King Hassan announced a six billion dirham (\$650 million) public works programme Saturday to provide employment in rural areas of Morocco stricken by two years of drought. The king said funds would be invested in dams to irrigate 250,000 hectares, 3,500 kilometres of roads, forestry and wells. He said the programme would aid 300,000 farmers directly and 1.5 million indirectly. The king spoke after a traditional ceremony in which hundreds of officials pledged their loyalty to the throne after the feast of 'Eid Al Fitr. Some regions lost 90 per cent of cereal crops in the past two years due to drought, an Interior Ministry official said at the ceremony.

Fires found under seat on Cairo bus

CAIRO (AP) — Police jittery a day after a bomb exploded in downtown Cairo evacuated a bus Sunday after a passenger found flames left under one of the seats. A police official, who requested anonymity, said a passenger found three flares in a plastic bag under a seat while the bus went through Aseba Square, the same location as the latest blast. The source said the bus was immediately cleared and explosive experts defused the flares. On Saturday, a bomb blew up in a civil defence building at Ataba while officers tried to defuse it after a security man found it near a parked police car. The officer killed in the explosion, Major Samir Mansour, 35, was buried Sunday.

U.S. said to protest 'Iraq-Iran oil deal'

White House denies any shift in policy vis-a-vis Saddam

WASHINGTON (Agencies) — The Clinton administration secretly protested to Iran last week about a large oil shipment it received from Iraq in apparent violation of U.N. trade sanctions, the Washington Post reported.

The paper said senior U.S. officials, who were not identified by name, expressed concern that the shipment could signal an agreement between Iran and Iraq to flout the trade sanctions imposed on Iraq by the United Nations Security Council after the 1990 invasion of Kuwait.

The report in the paper's Sunday edition quotes U.S. officials as saying Iran responded to the U.S. protest by insisting it was respecting the trade embargo.

But the Post said U.S. intelligence sources are convinced the shipment was too large to have taken place without the Iranian government's knowledge.

The paper said the shipment appeared to have involved dozens of tanker trucks, but said its sources declined to identify the shipment's route or provide other details.

The report said U.S. officials were not sure how much oil was involved, but that it was too much to pass for a low grade smuggling operation.

The Post said the protest to Iran was issued through diplomatic intermediaries, but that officials refused to say what countries were involved. The United States has not had diplomatic relations with Iran since 1979 and routinely communicates with the Iranian government through the Swiss government.

The administration has not decided whether to make a formal protest to the United Nations, the paper said.

A White House spokesman said meanwhile President Bill Clinton does not believe Iraqi President Saddam Hussein will be able to remain in power and comply fully with all U.N. resolutions involving Iraq.

George Stephanopoulos, the White House communications director, said in a telephone interview with Reuters that there has been no change in Mr. Clinton's approach to dealing with the Iraqi leader.

He denied a report in the Washington Post that the administration would issue a statement Monday making clear that Washington was no longer explicitly demanding President Saddam be ousted before it lifted economic sanctions on Iraq.

The spokesman insisted that Mr. Clinton's policy on Iraq was "the one we've had ever since he's been in office."

"Our primary goal is to have Iraq comply fully with all U.N. Security Council resolutions. We don't believe Saddam can comply fully with these resolutions and still remain in power," he said.

Mr. Stephanopoulos dismissed a question on whether the Clinton administration could accept President Saddam's remaining in power if all U.N. resolutions were honoured.

"It's a non-issue," he said. "The practical effect is the same. We don't believe he can comply with all U.N. resolutions and still remain in power."

"There is no indication that he can. He is not in compliance with any of the resolutions right now and there's no reason to believe that he ever will be in compliance," he said. "It's just not going to happen."

Polish, Indian and Turkish diplomats return to Kabul

KABUL (AP) — Poland Saturday sent back its diplomats to find out whether it is safe to return to the battered Afghan capital and reopen the embassy.

Earlier this week, Indian and Turkish diplomats returned to Kabul to gauge the chances for a durable peace in a city divided among the warring rebel groups that replaced communist rule and have been struggling for nearly a year to establish a government.

Poland closed its mission in Kabul as outlaw rebels bombarded the city, killing more than 2,500 people, most of them civilians. India and Turkey shut down their embassies in February when rebels again pounded the city and killed more than 1,000 people.

Only five of about 40 embassies — Pakistan, Iran, Saudi Arabia, North Korea and the Palestine Liberation Organisation — still operate, but only with skeleton staffs.

The rocket and mortar attacks on Kabul and its devastated suburbs stopped Tuesday for Eid Al Fitr.

Despite a ceasefire and power-sharing agreement signed earlier this month in Pakistan by eight of the nine main rebel groups, few believe it will last long. At least a dozen ceasefires have been signed in the past year among the rebel groups fighting for more power.

The rebel chiefs are supposed to meet Monday at an undisclosed location around Kabul to try again to form a cabinet. A three-day meeting last week failed to resolve the most contentious and divisive issues.

But several leaders, including President Burhanuddin Rabbani, have indicated they would not attend the meeting, which will be headed by Prime Minister-designate Gnlbuddin Hekmatyar, leader of the radical Hezb-e-Islami faction that pounded the capital with thousands of rockets in a bid to unseat the Islamic government.

Mr. Rabbani and Mr. Hekmatyar have publicly promised to work together to restore peace and stability to the capital. But tensions rose among their followers, who accused each other of trying to assassinate their leaders.

Mr. Hekmatyar's forces contend a mine planted in the road was detonated by remote control just minutes before he passed by. Mr. Rabbani's forces, meanwhile, contend his convoy was fired Monday while passing through an area south of Kabul controlled by Mr. Hekmatyar's staffs.

Mr. Rabbani and Mr. Hekmatyar also remain at odds over the future of Defence Minister Ahmad Shah Masoud. Mr. Rabbani insists Mr. Masoud stay. Mr. Hekmatyar says he must go.

Many Afghans believe that with Mr. Masoud and his troops out of the way, Mr. Hekmatyar could easily take power.

But General Abdul Momin, one of the country's most powerful military officers, vowed the army would not recognise any cabinet that excluded Mr. Masoud.

"There will be no stability in this cabinet and the fighting will start again," Gen. Momin said. "We will not recognise this cabinet."

JORDAN TELEVISION
Tel: 77111-14

PROGRAMME TWO
18:00 La Légende de l'Islam
19:00 News in French
19:15 Magazine Sportif
19:30 News in Hebrew
20:00 News in Arabic
20:30 Step by Step
21:10 Marlin Bay
22:00 News in English
22:30 Vietnam

PRAYER TIMES
06:57 Fajr
15:25 (Sunset) Dhuhr
11:41 Dhuhr
13:12 'Asr
17:57 Maghrib
19:15 'Isha

CHURCHES
St. Mary of Nazareth Church Swedisch, Tel. 810748
Assemblies of God Church, Tel. 632785
St. Joseph Church Tel. 624590
Church of the Annunciation Tel. 637440
De la Salle Church Tel. 661757
Teresian Church Tel. 622366
Church of the Annunciation Tel. 623541

Anglican Church Tel. 62826, Tel. 626543
Armenian Catholic Church Tel. 771331
Armenian Orthodox Church Tel. 775261
St. Ephraim Church Tel. 771751
Assam International Church Tel. 625256
Evangelical Lutheran Church Tel. 624328
The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints Tel. 623634, 624932
Church of the Nazarene Tel. 675691

WEATHER
Bulletin supplied by the Department of Meteorology.
A drop in temperatures will take place and some clouds will appear at low altitudes. Winds will be southerly moderate to fresh. In Aqaba, winds will be southerly moderate and seas rough.

Min./Max. temp.
Amman 8 / 19
Aqaba 15 / 27
Deserts 6 / 21
Jordan Valley 13 / 26

Yesterday's high temperatures: Amman 26, Aqaba 32 humidity readings: Amman 16 per cent, Aqaba 17 per cent.

JORDAN TIMES DAILY GUIDE AND CALENDAR

USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS
NIGHT DUTY

AMMAN:
Dr. Jamal Ja'bari 796460
Dr. Mohammad Al Ghoul 790730
Dr. Yahya Abdul Rahim 784072
Dr. Mahmoud Al Idrisi 898787
Firas pharmacy 661912
Ferdous pharmacy 778336
Al Asema pharmacy 637053
Naroukh pharmacy 623672
Al Salam pharmacy 626730
Yacoub pharmacy 644945
Shamsi pharmacy 437660
Naroukh pharmacy 623672
Najih pharmacy 847632

IRBID:
Dr. Mohammad Al Tu'ani (—)
Alkuds pharmacy (—)

ZARQA:
Dr. Nasser Ibrahim (—)
Khalil pharmacy 955418

EMERGENCIES
Food Control Centre 637111
Civil Defence Department 661111
Civil Defence Emergency 630341
Fire Brigade 192, 621111, 637777
Blood Bank 78121
Highway Police 843402
Traffic Police 896390
Public Security Department 63021
University Hospital 843845
Al-Mushor Hospital 6672719
Mulhas, J. Amman 636140
Palestine, Shamsi 661714
Shamsi Hospital 669131
University Hospital 843845
Al-Mushor Hospital 6672719
The Islamic, Abdali 66612757
Al-Ahli, Abdali 6641646
Indian, Al-Muhajir 7710173
Al-Bashir, J. Ashrafieh 7751126
Army, Marik 89161115
Queen Alia Hospital 60224050
Amal Hospital 641253

HOSPITALS
AMMAN:
Hussein Medical Centre 813813/32
Khalid Maternity, J. Amn 6428166
Abdali Maternity, J. Amn 6424162
Jabal Amman Maternity 642362
Mulhas, J. Amman 636140
Palestine, Shamsi 661714
Shamsi Hospital 669131
University Hospital 843845
Al-Mushor Hospital 6672719
The Islamic, Abdali 66612757
Al-Ahli, Abdali 6641646
Indian, Al-Muhajir 7710173
Al-Bashir, J. Ashrafieh 7751126
Army, Marik 89161115
Queen Alia Hospital 60224050
Amal Hospital 641253

IRBID:
Princess Beama Hospital (02)27555
Queen Catholic Hospital (02)27275
Ibn Al Nafies Hospital (02)47100
AQABA:
Princess Haya Hospital (03)34111

FOR THE TRAVELLER
QUEEN ALIA INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT
This information is supplied by Royal Jordanian (RJ) information department at the Queen Alia International Airport Tel. (05)5200-5, where it should always be verified.

ARRIVALS
Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights (Terminal 1)
07:15 Sanaa (RJ)
08:00 Beirut (RJ)
09:15 Riyadh (RJ)
09:15 Cairo, Aqaba (RJ)
09:20 Dubai, Abu Dhabi (RJ)
10:45 Bahrain, Doha (RJ)
11:00 New Delhi (RJ)

DEPARTURES
Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights (Terminal 1)
10:25 London (RJ)
11:00 Beirut (RJ)
11:15 Toronto/Montreal (RJ)
12:10 London (RJ)
12:15 Lebanon
12:45 Frankfurt (RJ)
13:00 Cairo (RJ)
13:00 Riyadh (RJ)
13:00 Dhahran (RJ)
13:00 Dubai, Karachi (RJ)
13:30 Bahrain, Doha (RJ)
13:30 Abu Dhabi, Muscat (RJ)

Other Flights (Terminal 2)
06:00 Khartoum (SU)
06:30 Aden (AL)
09:30 Cairo (MS)
10:30 Abu Dhabi, Doha (GF)
14:00 Istanbul (TK)
15:00 Khartoum (SU)
19:00 Dubai, Damascus (EM)
21:45 Vienna, Larnaca (OS)

MARKET PRICES
Upper/lower price in ffs per kg.
Apple 700 / 530
Bananas 700 / 700
Banana (Makassar) 640 / 640
Beans 100 / 100
Cabbage 100 / 50
Carrot 180 / 120
Cauliflower 200 / 150
Cucumbers (large) 150 / 100
Cucumbers (small) 300 / 200
Garlic 200 / 180
Grapefruit 300 / 150
Lemon 370 / 300
Marrow (large) 400 / 350
Marrow (small) 100
Mint 210 / 180
Onion (dry) 800 / 600
Onion (green) 220 / 160
Orange 400 / 350
Pepper (hot) 400 / 350
Pepper (sweet) 600 / 400
Potato 220 / 140
Tomato 150 / 60
Spinach 120 / 60

NMC string quartet to compete in Jordan

AMMAN (J.T.) — Members of the String Quartet at the National Music Conservatory (NMC) of Noor Al Hussein Foundation, (NHFF) will take part in the International Chamber Music Competition, in Osaka, Japan next month.

The NMC String Quartet, made up of musicians Aram Zarayan and Mohammad Ali Abbas on the violin, Samir Jawad on the cello, and Farid Al Watar, on the viola, was tape-auditioned by a highly qualified jury in charge of nominating competing ensembles.

On the eve of the international music contest, the quartet will give two public concerts in Beirut, one today at the American University of Beirut (AUB) and another on Wednesday March 31.

The second concert will be performed on the occasion of the inauguration of the newly-

established hall of the Faculty of Medicine at Saint Joseph University.

Both concerts are co-sponsored by NMC, Royal Jordanian and the Lebanese Jeunesse Musicale.

The concert programme includes three pieces: two by the German composer Beethoven and the other by Belgian composer Gossec.

String quartets are rare in the world because they require musicians who can create a balance between professional skills, rapport and maturity.

Established in 1986 through the efforts of Her Majesty Queen Noor, and with funding from the Jordan Society in Washington, D.C., the National Music Conservatory offers young Jordanians the opportunity to develop their musical talents through individual and group instruction on a wide range of musical instruments.



Jordan's National Sports Team for the Handicapped arrives home, Saturday with gold, silver and bronze medals won at the Special Winter Olympics in Austria

Young athletes bring home the gold, silver and bronze

AMMAN (J.T.) — Jordan's National Sports Team for the Handicapped returned home Saturday with one gold, two silver and one bronze medals after taking part in the Special Winter Olympics in Salzburg, Austria this month.

Ten youths aged 12-17 participated in the individual gliding and speed skating events and in the team figure skating competition.

The team was sponsored by the Nazik Al Hariri Centre for Special Education and was accompanied by Chief Chamberlain Prince Ra'ad Ben Zeid who is chairman of the Special Jordanian Olympiad, and six other sports officials.

The March 21-26 International competition was attended by participants from over 100 countries; it was Jordan's first appearance in a winter sports competition for the handicapped.

Nazik Al Hariri Centre Director Yasir Salem said in a statement to the Jordan News Agency, Petra, that despite Jordan's lack of experience in such championships, the 10 participants did extremely well.

One of the technical difficulties facing the participants, he said, was that they were used to artificial (wax) skating rinks in Jordan and in Austria they had to skate on natural ice rinks.

"We are now trying to further develop the young athletes' skills so they can attain higher goals in future world championships," Dr. Salem said.

He added that this can be done through employing experienced coaches and improving the present facilities and the training halls in Jordan.

At the moment we are also trying to train these youths in the skills of hockey; a game that is suitable for mentally-handicapped children, Dr. Salem said.

He said Prince Ra'ad has already concluded an agreement to bring international coaches to the Nazik Al Hariri Centre to train the children in hockey.

Established in 1984, the Nazik Al Hariri Centre aims to develop the abilities of the mentally-handicapped, preparing them to be productive and independent members of society.

JMA protests arrest of Baqaa camp doctor

By Elia Nasrallah
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — Jordan Medical Association (JMA) President Ishaq Maraga Sunday voiced the association's protest against the arrest of a radiologist, who operates a clinic in the Baqaa refugee camp, for allegedly causing the death of a 45-year-old woman.

According to the law, Dr. Maraga told the Jordan Times, the doctor's actions should have been reported to the JMA for consultation before making the arrest.

The radiologist, whose name was withheld by the police, was said to have given the patient an injection to prepare her for an IVP test (intravenous pyelography). The injection allegedly caused the woman's death.

According to the law, the JMA

should be consulted before any measure can be taken against any doctor registered with the association, said Dr. Maraga.

We have repeatedly asked that the law be respected and in this particular case we approached Minister of Justice Youssef Mbaldeen who showed prompt response, but regrettably nothing has been done, Dr. Maraga said.

He said the radiologist was detained for questioning throughout the 'Eid Al Fitr holiday and was kept in detention until Sunday while the police investigated the woman's death.

"We demand that a doctor should not be treated like an ordinary criminal, and we demand that the law be respected as to the consultation with the JMA before legal procedures are taken," said Dr. Maraga, adding

that, more often than not, in cases where a patient dies under treatment the doctor is not found responsible for the death.

According to a report in the local press, the doctor had tried to save the woman's life before rushing her to the Jordan University Hospital for further treatment.

But the woman was pronounced dead upon arrival by the hospital.

In this particular case, Dr. Maraga said, the woman might have died of shock or other causes.

But the JMA was kept in the dark and could not offer its opinion to facilitate the procedures to help solve the mystery, he said.

The police have declined to release the name of the doctor, but identified the deceased woman as A.A.H.

HOME NEWS IN BRIEF

Princess Sarvath attends students theatre festival

AMMAN (Petra) — Her Royal Highness Princess Sarvath Al Hassan will Thursday patronize theatrical performances by Jordanian private schools to be held at the International Baccalaureate School Theatre on the occasion of International Theatre Day. Theatrical groups from the Baccalaureate, Al Manhal Amman National and Al Ahlyeh schools will participate in the four-day festival.

Premier returns home from Portugal

AMMAN (Petra) — Prime Minister Sharif Zeid Ben Shaker returned home Sunday after a several-day private visit to Portugal.

Ministry checks transport needs for pilgrims

AMMAN (Petra) — Awqaf and Islamic Affairs Minister Izzeddin Al Khatib Al Tamimi Sunday chaired a meeting for representatives of companies transporting pilgrims to Mecca and Medina and discussed preparations for the coming pilgrimage season to start by the end of May. Participants at the meeting, which was attended by Ministry Secretary General Ahmad Hlayel, affirmed that all transport companies have prepared the necessary vehicles to facilitate the pilgrims. Sheikh Tamimi urged the companies to abide by the pilgrimage instructions for the current year and stressed the need to provide comfortable lodgings for Jordanian pilgrims in Mecca and Medina.

Jordan to attend Arabsat meeting

AMMAN (Petra) — Jordan will participate in the meetings of the extraordinary session of the Board of Directors of the Arab Space Telecommunications Corporation (Arabsat) due to start in Cairo Saturday. In its three-day meetings, the board will discuss several issues related to the manufacturing of the second generation of Arabsat-1 satellites and means of launching them into orbit in 1995. Jordan will be represented at the meetings by the director general of the Telecommunications Corporation (TCC) who is expected to leave for Cairo on Friday. The corporation's board has entrusted its executive bureau to sign deals for manufacturing two satellites, one to be launched and the second to be kept in case the first launching attempt fails or when the work load increases.

Tenders approved on Balqa road works

SALT (Petra) — Balqa Governor Eid Al Qataneh Sunday approved referring several tenders to a number of local contractors who will open and asphalt the Rummeen-Balqa road, at a total cost of JD 19,200. Salt-Arda Road at a total cost of JD 18,740 and the Wadi Shu'eb Road at JD 40,432.

Zarqa holds summer vegetable seminar

ZARQA (Petra) — A seminar on summer vegetables was held Sunday in Zarqa city with the participation of several agricultural engineers. The seminar involved a discussion of means of fertilising and irrigating summer vegetables, as well as the uses of insecticides.

Geologists prepare for conferences

AMMAN (Petra) — The Executive Bureau of the Arab Geologists Federation will Monday open a three-day meeting to discuss arrangements for holding the Third Conference on Middle East Geology to convene in Amman next year and a conference on the water policies in the Arab World to be held in Libya.

Jordanian cyclist to head on 5th tour

AMMAN (Petra) — Jordanian world traveller Ali Etoum is preparing for his fifth bicycle tour. This time he will be touring the United States. Mr. Etoum said he plans to embark on his tour in April when he travels from Amman to Syria and Turkey. He will then board a plane for the U.S. tour. Mr. Etoum, who covered several regions on his cycling tours, has just returned from his fourth journey which included the Arab Gulf states.

Italian envoy discusses cooperation with Mu'tah University officials

AMMAN (J.T.) — Acting President of Mu'tah University Mohammad Mansour headed a meeting with Italian Ambassador to Jordan Romano Bettini Sunday at Mu'tah University to discuss ways of bridging various academic and scientific cooperation efforts with Italy.

Professor Mansour informed Dr. Bettini and his accompanying delegates Cultural Attache Dr. Bettini Giovanni Benenati, Italian languages lecturer at the University of Jordan Emanuela Minardo, Archaeological sciences, expert Professor Eulini, and Archaeologist Dr. Pomper, about developments at Mu'tah University over the last decade.

During the meeting the Deans of Sciences, Arts, Graduate Studies and the director of the Central Library discussed several issues which may formulate possible cooperation with Italy.

The possibilities of transferring the knowledge and know-how in numerous, mutually beneficial fields were also discussed. Such fields include Italian language, archaeology, computer sciences, tourism and history.

A successful programme of cooperation is already in progress between the Computer Science Department at Mu'tah University and the University of Rome.

This programme is financed by a grant from the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs in the amount of 2 billion Italian lira (\$1.5 million).

The programme is within the technical assistance protocol which includes technical assistance, equipment for laboratories and scholarships.

Settler stabbed to death in Gaza

(Continued from page 1)

The Emman settlement movement urged the government to conduct widespread searches in the Gaza Strip, using tanks to go house to house to seek out attackers.

Uri Ariel, a settler leader, said he was wanted more than another explanation from the government. "The time has come to succeed, not explain," he told Israel army radio.

At its weekly cabinet meeting, the government agreed to increase the number of police by 1,000 to deal with the violence. The increase will be funded by 50 million shekels (\$18 million) in budget cuts from various ministries, the government said.

Mr. Rabin repeated his call for Israelis to stop baring Palestinians from the occupied territories and added Arabs' movement inside Israel should also be curbed to prevent violence.

The prime minister also said Israeli high school students should arm themselves with clubs to defend themselves from attackers, like the one who stabbed five students and a principal in West Jerusalem last week.

Mr. Trabelsi told the Associated Press that 10 minutes before he was alerted to the stabbing, he saw Gawi with a group of Palestinian workers who were working on a house in a new development being added to the settlement.

Nisanit is an uninhabited settlement of orange-roofed dwellings and villas under construction on sand dunes beside the Mediterranean Sea. Soldiers and Jewish builders milled around the blood stained entrance to Gawi's unfinished villa.

Nearby, 25 Palestinians detained by troops sat in two lines in the sand at the side of road.

About 3,000 Jewish settlers live among 600,000 Palestinians in the crowded Gaza Strip.

Mr. Rabin, speaking at Kfar Saba in central Israel after the



Palestinian boys throw stones at Israeli soldiers in the Shoofat refugee camp in the occupied Gaza Strip (AFP photo)

popular boardwalk, launching a large manhunt by police and angry residents, police and reporters said. A taxi evacuated the Israeli, a knife stuck in his back, to a hospital where he was listed in serious condition, said a police spokesman.

After news of the attack spread, police said a Jewish youth stabbed an Arab in the leg lightly wounding him.

Troops shot dead a Palestinian and seriously wounded a second when they opened fire on an Israeli patrol in the Gaza neighbourhood of Sheikh Radwan, the army said. It said a third man, apparently wounded, had escaped and no soldiers were hurt.

In Jerusalem, an Arab allegedly stabbed an Israeli jogging on a

Road accidents kill 402 in 1992 — PSD

By a Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — A total of 402 persons died and 10,839 others were injured in road accidents in Jordan in 1992, according to the Public Security Department (PSD) Sunday.

The number of dead was 23 more than those killed in road accidents in Jordan in 1991, and the number of injured increased by 713 over 1991 figures, the PSD said in a statement to the Jordan Times.

According to PSD figures, last year's road accidents involved 21,723 vehicles against 31,321 vehicles involved in accidents during 1991.

The figures were released as an ad hoc higher committee charged with preparing for the May observance of International Traffic Day and Arab Traffic Week held its first meeting.

Convened at the Royal Automobile Club, the meeting was chaired by Brigadier Khaled Aref, Director of the Licensing Department.

It was decided that the PSD will contact provincial governors to set up committees to work with the higher committee to carry out a public awareness programme against road accidents, Brig. Aref added.

This year the event will be held under the slogan "Children's Safety on the Roads is the Responsibility of All," according to the PSD official.

Brig. Aref said the slogan was carefully chosen because most of the victims of road accidents are children; many of them under the age of 10.

The public awareness programme, he said, aims at helping motorists adopt a more humane behaviour in dealing with children on the roads, especially school children, and teaching children traffic rules through the help of parents and school teachers.

The higher committee, which met Sunday, groups representatives of the Traffic Department, various concerned ministries, government departments, the media and trade unions.

A preliminary meeting was held before the 'Eid Al Fitr holiday during which sub-committees were created to help prepare for the May 4 celebrations.

Population meeting to assess strategies

AMMAN (J.T.) — Minister of Planning Ziad Fariz Sunday said the Arab Ministerial Conference on Population due to open in Amman on April 4 will examine issues related to population in the Arab World and assess related national strategies.

Dr. Fariz, who will head Jordan's delegation to the conference, said the meeting was expected to issue a set of recommendations on policies governing population for submission to an international conference on population and development to be held in Cairo next year.

The Amman conference, organised by the U.N. Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA), in cooperation with the Arab League and the UN Fund for Population Activities (UNFPA), will be attended by delegates from various Arab states and U.N. agencies.

Issues of concern to the Arab region, such as population growth and composition, as well as programmes to develop the environment and others to deal with domestic migrations, will be tackled at next week's conference, said Dr. Fariz.

Also on the agenda are issues pertaining to women and development and family planning and health, the minister added.

He said the Amman conference, is a follow up to a world conference on population held in Mexico in 1984.

Pasture land development is focus of symposium

AMMAN (J.T.) — Maintenance and development of pasture lands in the Arab World is the focus of a four-day symposium that will open in Amman next weekend.

Delegations from various Arab countries will attend the meeting organised by the Council of Arab Ministers responsible for the environment in cooperation with the Jordanian Ministry of Municipal and Rural Affairs and the Environment.

One of the working papers to be reviewed at the symposium has been prepared by the International Centre for Agricultural Research in the Dry Areas (ICARDA).

Other working papers from various participating countries are expected to deal with development of pasture land in the Arab countries Asia and Africa, as well as countries in the Horn of Africa and those of the Gulf Cooperation Council.

Some of the papers will focus on means of combating desertification and regional efforts to develop pasture lands.

The meeting, which will be opened formally Saturday by Minister of municipal and Rural Affairs and the Environment Abdul Razzaq Tubeishat is expected to be addressed also by the other Arab ministers.

Pasture development in the Arab World is one of the major concerns of the Aleppo-based ICARDA.

Established in 1977, ICARDA is one of 13 centres supported by a consortium of over 40 countries, international and region organisations and private foundations.

It focuses its research efforts on areas with dry summers and where precipitation in winter ranges from 200 to 600 millimetres.

Claim letter

(Continued from page 1)

dictator countries in the region." The letter warned: "If our demands are not met all of our functional groups in the army will continue to execute our missions against military and civilian targets in and out of the United States. This also will include some potential nuclear targets."

"For your own information, our army has more than one hundred and fifty suicidal soldiers ready to go ahead."

The letter added: "The American people must know that their civilians who got killed are not better than those who are getting killed by the American weapons and support." The newspaper also ran a photo of the envelope with the report.

The five suspects arrested in connection with the blast are all from the Middle East and are believed to be followers of hard-

Socialists routed

(Continued from page 1)

tonight is a certain way of practicing politics," he said.

"The left is going to have to find out again how to manage politics, find the people on the ground again, the ordinary, everyday people."

The defeat deprived Mr. Rocard of national exposure in parliament and severely damaged his presidential ambitions.

But Mr. Rocard said it was the right moment to consider a presidential bid. "I'm still a fighting, militant politician and that's not going to change," he said.

Industry Minister Dominique Strauss Kahn said Mr. Rocard's defeat was just part of a trend that should not be viewed as a personal attack on him. "I don't think this would affect his capacity to lead the revival of the left," said.

WHAT'S GOING ON

The following listings are compiled from monthly bulletins and the daily Arabic press. Readers are advised to verify the listed time and place with the concerned institutions.

EXHIBITIONS

- ★ Exhibition entitled the Memory of Silk, displaying traditional Jordanian and Palestinian costumes, shawls, carpets, pottery, copperware, from the Widad Kassar collection — at the French Cultural Centre.
- ★ Exhibition of pottery and ceramics by Sa'eda Al Bitar Ghannam at Abdul Hameed Shomna Foundation Gallery, 1st Circle, opposite the Iraqi Embassy.
- ★ Exhibition of paintings entitled "Meditating Land and Man" by plastic artist Hussein Da'na at Baladina Art Gallery.

THEATRE

- ★ Play entitled "The Death of Thebes" at the Royal Cultural Centre's main theatre at 8 p.m.

SEMINAR

- ★ Seminar on "Teaching Literature" at the British Council at 5:30 p.m.

KEY PRICES

Jordan Times

An independent Arab political daily published in English by the Jordan Press Foundation. Established 1975.

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Editor-in-Chief:

GEORGE S. HAWATMEH

Editorial and advertising offices:

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University Road, P.O. Box 6710, Amman, Jordan.

Telephones: 667171/6, 670141-4

Telex: 21497 ALRAI JO

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Weekly Political Pulse

The price for increased Palestinian-Israeli violence

By Waleed Sadi

THE INCREASED tempo of violence in the occupied Palestinian territories may suggest that the Palestinian conflict is coming to a head. To be sure, the upsurge in the Palestinian intifada on the magnitude that it has assumed of late corresponds well with the experiences of other peoples across the world who had to resort to armed conflicts to attain their national goals.

There is hardly a nation that achieved recognition and statehood without an element of an armed struggle at one stage or another. This is borne out by history since time immemorial. Perhaps it is this recognition of the lessons of history that is driving the Palestinian people ever closer to open warfare against Israel and its occupying authorities in the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

Yet it cannot be assumed that the increase in the intensity of the Palestinian uprising is without a price. There is always a calculated risk, or rather incalculable risk, that the climate for peaceful coexistence and peaceful accommodation between the Palestinian people and the Israelis could irreversibly suffer. There is no escape from the long range perception that any solution between the Palestinians and the Israelis would have to be based on some mutual accommodations on the basis of international norms and standards already reflected in several international decisions, notably U.N. Security Council Resolution 242.

The pursuit of an armed conflict with Israel must therefore be carefully articulated and implemented and not be left to the whims of the youth. The Palestinian leadership must come to grips with the turn of events in the occupied territories and formulate a coherent policy as to where the armed struggle can be directed and for what purpose.

This brings to question the degree of control that the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) enjoys over the various activities of the Palestinian people under Israeli occupation. The PLO has been openly challenged by other Palestinian factions from the far

right as well as from the far left, giving rise to speculation that the Palestinian intifada lacks a coherent sense of direction or control. There is but one way to rectify the situation in the West Bank and Gaza Strip; and it lies in early construction of Palestinian institutions that are out in the open and exercising some sovereignty rights over the fate and destiny of their people.

In spite of more than 25 years of Israeli occupation, there has not been a corresponding rise in Palestinian institutions whether on the political or economic levels.

The pursuit of an armed conflict with Israel must be carefully articulated and implemented and not be left to the whims of the youth. The Palestinian leadership must come to grips with the turn of events in the occupied territories and formulate a coherent policy as to where the armed struggle can be directed and for what purpose.

There is no reason to await an Israeli green light before the Palestinians take their future into their own hands by assuming direct control over several key dimensions of their lives. The open division between the various Palestinian groups has admittedly prevented the Palestinians from moving forward in an effective way in the direction of self government. However, the current view that the Palestinians may not take a leap forward in the direction of self-rule unless and until there is a breakthrough in the peace negotiations between the two sides is a proposition that

lacks credence and precedent.

The Jews of Palestine had established several institutions to govern themselves long before the British mandate was declared over. By the time the United Nations bestowed recognition on the newly created Jewish state in Palestine, there were already numerous operational Jewish infrastructures that were clearly a prelude to complete statehood and independence. The Palestinians can follow the footsteps of the Israelis who preempted the course of events prior to formal recognition of their state in 1945.

There is no pressing need for national elections for this purpose since, at this early stage, no one in his right mind would expect general elections. Parliamentary elections cannot be conducted in the first place without the attainment of normalcy in the field. The construction of a state requires the bypassing of democratically conducted elections. This is well enshrined in the history of nations that were formed by piecemeal efforts, albeit undemocratic in their nature.

There is therefore every excuse for the Palestinians to rush into the formation of their national institutions even at a time when the prospects of achieving peace in the region still look remote. Such an analysis leads one to but one conclusion: The formation of a Palestinian government in exile is required now. This is a critical period in the history of the Palestinian cause and a time for momentous decisions. The idea of declaring a government in exile has been floating around for a long time. All it needs is a bold decision to go ahead with the idea, especially in these trying times when the Palestinians are seeking effective engagement of the Israelis in meaningful bilateral peace talks.

The Israeli side has been complaining and rightly so that the Palestinian side appears rudderless and without effective leadership. The Palestinians can rebut such charges by announcing that, in fact, they have a strong and effective leadership that is capable of calling all the shots on their behalf.

Money to save souls

ZARQA, the second largest city in the Kingdom, is at long last getting some attention from the central government. Efforts for the establishment of a full-fledged university near the city have been under way, while the minister of youth has just announced a plan to build a sports city there. Zarqa has for a long time been neglected and forgotten and consequently it is suffering from all kinds of problems faced by a community anywhere. The Zarqa River has been turned into a dumping ground for urban and industrial waste. The city's neighbourhoods have, over the decades, sprawled without any sense of urban planning to encroach even on state-owned land. And although Zarqa has traditionally provided and still provides the bulk of industrial workers in the Kingdom, neither our industry nor the government has invested money and development effort in the city itself. One municipal council after the other grappled with its problems with very little, if any, success. Most of Zarqa's streets and alleys remain largely unpaved and dirty. It lacks parks, playgrounds for children and other facilities for the young and the grown-ups. In the 1960s it had three swimming pools and possibilities to swim at a dozen locations along the Zarqa River; today it has none.

The announcement Saturday by the minister of youth, Dr. Saleh Irsheidat, that the city is going to build a JD 5 million sports facility must be good news for Zarqawis.

The concept of sports cities has been a success in many ways. As is the case in Amman they provide for sports tournaments where people could enjoy watching their children play and swim or indulge in the frenzy of cheering their favourite teams. But the concentration of all sports facilities in one location has its drawbacks too. As one popular sports enthusiast commented, with five million (dinars) the government could build five modest facilities at five different neighbourhoods and thus cater for the needs of all parts of the city. "The experience from the Amman facility has shown that only a fraction of would-be sportsmen and sports-women could have access to the Al Hussein Sports City. In fact, some parts of Amman's Al Hussein Sports City, like the swimming pools and the tennis courts are exclusive to certain sectors of the population. It is true that sports cities can accommodate a great number of spectators, but what this country needs is not only spectators but active participants in sports and other activities, something which sports cities — as we know them — are not made for. There are thousands of children and teenagers who compete with cars in our streets for a few minutes' of soccer and handball. Cities like Amman, Irbid and Zarqa need facilities in all neighbourhoods to avoid clashes between people and machines — to safeguard their children's lives.

We therefore hope that ideas like these could be thoroughly discussed and debated beforehand in order to assess their advantages or otherwise. JD 5 million is a lot of money that should be used wisely and economically, after all.

ARABIC PRESS COMMENTARIES

AL RA'I Arabic daily Sunday commented on reports published in the Washington Post about an imminent change of heart by the U.S. administration with regard to the Iraqi president and prospects for lifting the sanctions on the Iraqi people. Should these reports prove to be correct, the Iraqi people and the Arabs at large will have the right to demand that the leaders of Britain, the U.S. and France as well as Russia be tried as war criminals for causing so much sufferings to the Iraqi population and for devastating the Iraqi scientific achievements over the past three years, said the paper. Those leaders responsible for the aggression should be tried for their crimes against humanity, and for starving innocent children, the paper said. It was due to personal hatred on the part of the former U.S. president that led to such atrocities against Iraq, said the daily. It said that no doubt any change of policy on the part of Washington vis-a-vis the Iraqi leader would open the door for peace and would put an end to the feelings of hatred, and malice and extremism that have been simmering in the hearts of the Arab people in this region. The paper said that the Arab masses are full of indignation at these atrocious practices on the part of the colonial powers against the Iraqi people. "We are not convinced that the aggression launched against Iraq was merely to depose the Iraqi leader since the consequences were borne by the Iraqi people themselves," the paper said. Al Ra'i demanded an immediate end to the sanctions, it said, because they constitute a crime against the Arab Nation.

COMMENTING on Sunday's meeting in Damascus by the foreign ministers of Arab countries involved in the peace process, Al Dastour said that the parity is critical since it will decide the future of the peace process. Now that the Arab parties have received formal invitations to resume the talks in Washington next month, they are seriously contemplating the prospects of the peace talks and whether to go to Washington or not, said the paper. This is the first such meeting by the Arab ministers, since the last session of the peace talks in Washington and in the wake of a tour of Arab capitals by the U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher, who has just concluded talks with the Palestinian delegation in Washington, the paper said.

By Abdul Jawad Saleh

IN 1981, Ephraim Ahiram, of Israel's "military administration" in the occupied territories, stated that "in Gaza, Israel has a time-bomb in its lap, and the trigger is the demographic and socio-economic situation in the Strip." Unfortunately, the Israeli authorities have not only ignored this warning but have actually worked to worsen the economic and political situation in Gaza.

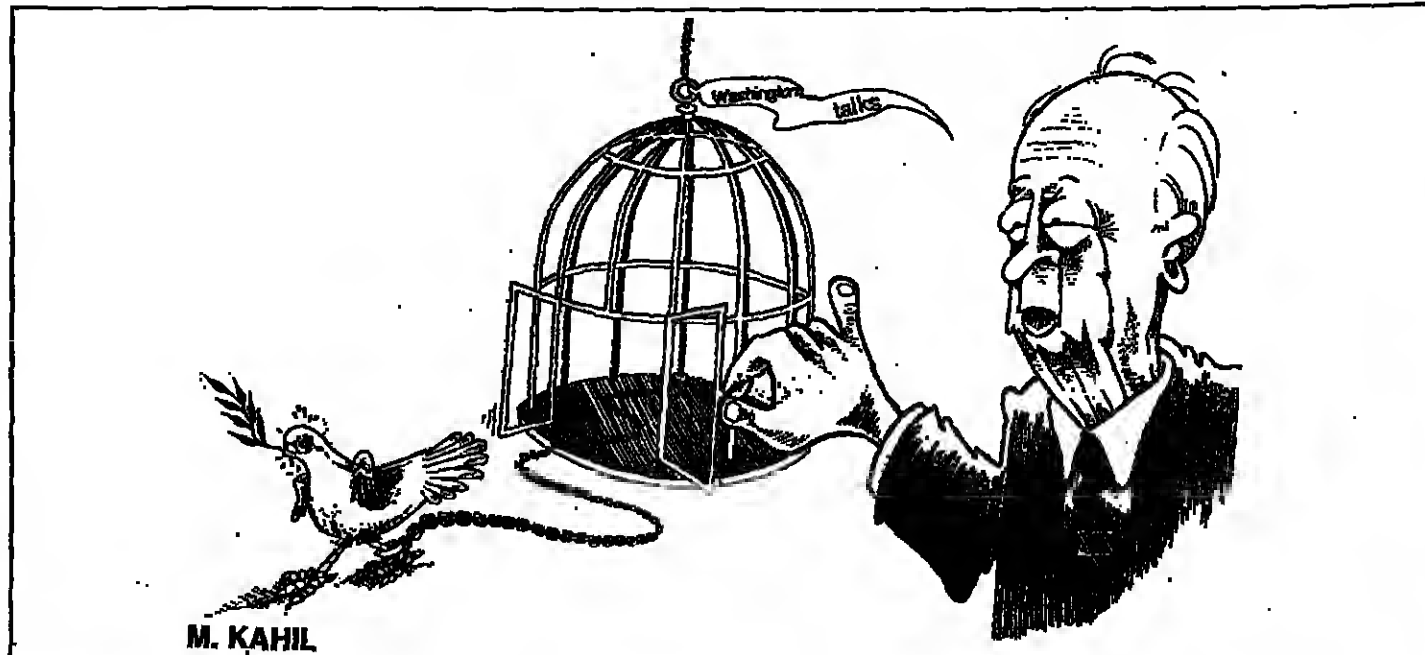
Since the occupation of the Strip in 1967, Israel has instituted a systematic policy of "deinstitutionalisation" to undermine the Gaza economy, ensuring an abundant supply of cheap labour for Israel's settlements and cities. Exasperating every day frustration, Israel confiscated most available land and water resources to accommodate a few hundred Jewish colonisers in the midst of Gaza's numerically exploding population. Israel thought this would serve its goals of subjugating the Palestinians and undermining any chances for a peaceful solution.

Initiated by the Labour government and followed by the Likud, "deinstitutionalisation" extended on to the political arena. Many from the Palestinians' political and social leadership, who may have been able to better direct the frustrations and ambitions of the Gaza population, were expelled or administratively detained and municipal elections were frozen, pre-empting the development of democratic institutions in the occupied territories. Even popular committees, which sought to organise Palestinian socio-political life, were fought mercilessly by the Israelis who perceived that such grass-roots organising would undermine their hegemony.

At present, close to 800,000 people are crammed into the tiny 44-km by 8-km area of the Strip. This represents a population density of 1,730 persons per square kilometre, compared to 198 persons in Israel and 193 in the West Bank. Of this population, over 300,000 live in refugee camps. The problems facing this population are greatly exacerbated by the policies of the occupation authorities. Over 50 per cent of the land of the Strip has either been expropriated or closed-off and Gaza agriculture has been devastated by the repressive regulations governing development, restrictions on exports, and the uprooting of more than 150,000 fruit-trees. In addition, just 1.5 agrotors of every shekel spent by the occupation authorities is spent on Gazans compared to 96.5 agrotors on settlers. One Western aid worker stated that Gaza had suffered from "two-and-a-half decades of repressive regulation of the economy, not to develop (it) but to stagnate it."

Further compounding this situation is the extremely high rate of unemployment, over 50 per cent, which is exacerbated by the continued destruction of Palestinian economic activity, such as agriculture, fishing and industry. Now that the Gaza economy has been so severely ruptured, up to 40 per cent of those who do work are reliant upon menial, day-labourer jobs inside Israel. Given the many curfews and closures of the Strip, these day-labourers, who support up to 500,000 dependents, are facing increased destitution and hunger.

The dire situation and endemic hopelessness is particularly hard on the youth, who see their future in increasingly bleak terms. Sixty per cent of Gaza's population is under 19, and 77 per cent is under 29. Given this preponderance of a young disaffected population, the increasingly violent resistance to the occupation can come as no



Gaza's explosion of anger

With the frustration of Gazans burning the heart of the Jewish state, Israel finally realises it has to end its occupation

surprise. A couple of young Gazans expressed the sentiments of their peers when they said: "Our only hope is to push the entire situation to extremes... Moderation is considered treachery... Ours is a people that is dying."

The grave socio-economic situation in the Gaza Strip is aggravated by the endless sieges and curfews of the area, and the population's frustration and anger at this situation is now compounded by the brutal increase in violent repression, such as the bombardment of homes with anti-tank missiles. Recently, the people of Khan Younis flooded an Israeli watch post. The Israeli soldiers opened fire, wounding and killing more than 60 people. But when they were overtaken by the indomitable will for freedom of the occupied, the soldiers fled their post. This might be the only option, short of massacres, left to the Israelis. The spiral of violence which stems from this anger has not yet reached its zenith, and recent developments prove that the time is ripe for pulling the occupation forces out of Gaza.

There has been a gradual realisation among Israeli decision-makers of this reality; though it is a twisted and racial realisation. In mid-1992, Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin said he wished Gaza would "drown in the sea." In December 1992, Moshe Arens, defence minister in the Likud government, said: "we need to get out of there, (Gaza) is in a terrible economic situation and people are living in impossible physical conditions. Our being there has no benefit." And, more recently, Environment Minister Yossi Sarid said, "Israel is not interested in ruling Gaza. (It) will be given over as soon as possible." He also recognised that the Palestinians "will not take Gaza without... the PLO leadership being able to sit in (it)."

But current Israeli policy is resulting not only in the death of innocent people, including women and children, but also of the peace process. Instead of confronting the crux of the Arab-Israeli conflict, the Palestinian issue, Israel is renegeing on Mr. Rabin's promise to reach an agreement with the Palestinians nine months after taking office, and instead is trying to forge separate deals with Arab states independent of any solution on the Palestinian issue. It is clear that the Israelis have forgotten

that one of the reasons behind the eruption of the intifada, besides confronting the occupation, was the feeling that the Palestinian cause was shelved, by the enemy as well as by brothers.

The thrusting of the issue of withdrawal from Gaza onto the Israeli political agenda stems from the explosion of the anger and frustration of Gaza into the heart of the Israeli state. Now, Israel's wish to rid itself of the "burden" of Gaza, and to "get Gaza off the streets of Tel Aviv" has prompted a bizarre and racist array of solutions. A "bumane" Israeli mother suggested the deportation of all Palestinian children to Europe. A Likud member of the Knesset suggested the right of self-determination! Where and for whom? To solve the predicament of the occupation, he suggested the Palestinians' right of self-determination be implemented in Jordan thereby evading a solution to the Palestinian-Israeli conflict by transforming it into an Arab-Israeli conflict instead.

Since the occupation of Gaza in 1967, Israel has instituted a systematic policy of "deinstitutionalisation" to undermine the Gazan economy, ensuring an abundant supply of cheap labour for Israel's settlement and cities.

However, some Israeli ministers are closer to the truth. They have suggested a unilateral withdrawal from Gaza. It is a half-truth because they have forgotten that Gaza represents Palestine, and the Gazans symbolise the Palestinian people. As Haider Abdul Shafi stressed, "I certainly am not going to entreat the Israelis to stay," but "we have no intention of separating Gaza from the whole Palestinian issue."

Whether the suggested unilateral withdrawal is a tactic or not, the Palestinian leadership cannot be spared the responsibility of dealing with it as a serious leadership should do. Maybe Israel's motive is to absolve itself from its "commitment" to implement U.N. Resolution 242 on the occupied West Bank. There are claims that there is a deal which implies the implementation of such a unilateral withdrawal. There are other claims that such a withdrawal is part of a cover-up to "deal" on other fronts. Significantly, if Israel is serious about withdrawal, why does it not bring

up the proposal in the proper forum, the bilateral negotiations? Regardless of all the possibilities, Israeli withdrawal from Gaza is welcomed under all and any circumstances. However, we suggest a plan which will simultaneously address the concerns of the Israelis and the plight and rights of the Palestinians, a plan which envisages a comprehensive peace and truce which bears the seeds of a future eruption of conflict. The plan is an occasional study which might be referred to if and when the question is brought to the table. The plan's source of reference is mainly the invitations to Madrid, in spite of their unfairness, and assumes an Israeli commitment to U.N. Resolution 242, implying the end of the occupation, albeit in stages.

The following steps constitute the basis for our plan, in the event of an Israeli withdrawal: First: Israel should implement confidence-building measures, increasing hope for a peaceful settlement among the suffering Palestinian people. The occupa-

tion authorities should cease measures of collective punishment, which serve only to placate the vengeful spirit of the racist extremists in Israel, and which provoke hatred and the desire for revenge among Palestinians. Israel should also cease its foot-dragging in the peace process, and refrain from the colonial game of divide-and-rule among the Arab partners. Israel's latest demand that Syria, "pledges that any peace treaty it signs with Israel would stand independently of the results of negotiations with other Arab nations or the Palestinians," leaving the Palestinians alone to "stew in their blood," serves only to increase Palestinian suspicions of Israel's real intentions.

The U.S. government bears great responsibility in enhancing hope, not only by ensuring Israel's "power edge," but to be sensitive, honest and faithful to its claims to respect human rights. It should work to immediately implement the Fourth Geneva Convention in the occupied

Palestinian territories. The Israelis and their Western allies should by now have learned the reasons behind the collective non-violent revolt, the intifada, and how it was transformed by Israel's violence into a violent form.

If hope is not raised among the brutalised and destitute Gazan population, then, ultimately, the collective rage of the occupied will leave Israel no choice but to withdraw unconditionally and unilaterally with ramifications for an uncontrollable future. Or, Israel will have to resort to the other remaining option, massacres, followed by a mass expulsion.

While building confidence and hope among Palestinians, the Israeli government must also confront the Israeli public with the enduring truth that there will be no individual or public security as long as Israel is trying to impose its hegemony over the Palestinian people.

Second: Israel should allow the immediate return of the Palestinians expelled to southern Lebanon in December 1992, as the problem constitutes the main obstacle to the resumption of the negotiations.

Third: Israel should free administrative detainees, prisoners of conscience and others who are capable of leading the population in rebuilding the infrastructure and social institutions of popular organisation, which the Israeli occupation has systematically destroyed.

Fourth: Israel should address the plight of the population of the refugee camps by setting them in their home villages from which they were expelled in 1948. This is a moral obligation, under which Israel has to assume responsibility for its earlier policies of expulsion and its on-going policies of impoverishment. It is also necessary because the lack of space for development in the coastal strip, the shortage of resources, including land and water, make it presently impossible, not only for a future Palestinian political apparatus but for any international body even with billions of dollars, to cope with the rehabilitation of such a densely populated area.

Fifth: Emptying the camps will help pre-empt the situation in Gaza from exploding irrevocably, and will provide space to develop decent housing, infrastructure and economic opportunities. This will guarantee the promise of a brighter future by eliminating the

cause of resentment among a population which currently exists under continual victimisation.

Sixth: This space for development will be greatly augmented by the evacuation of Israel's settlements, and the return to Palestinians of the large tracts of "closed-off" land. If such an arrangement is carried out, it should be possible for Gaza to establish an economy which will go some way to supporting the people and offer hope of a solution to the wider Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Economic projects such as developing the port, building a water salination plant or redeveloping the fishing and agricultural industries would go some way to facilitate Gaza's redevelopment. Moreover, it will help prevent any future friction which will eventually lead to a worse confrontation — a civil war.

Seventh: The above steps should be accompanied by parallel steps on the West Bank, including Jerusalem. For, whether in months or years, the Israelis will eventually face a similar situation on the West Bank if they fail to learn the lessons of Gaza. Steps should include the complete freeing of settlements, including those in the area of Jerusalem occupied in 1967.

Eighth: Withdrawal from Gaza should be accompanied by a parallel withdrawal from the cities of the West Bank. The elected municipal councils, which were illegally and arbitrarily dissolved in 1981, should be returned to office with real decision-making powers. This will ensure a guarantee that the future of the West Bank will not be prejudiced by such a move towards independence in Gaza.

Meanwhile, the form and timetable for Palestinian self-determination in the West Bank will continue to be negotiated in the on-going peace talks. These steps, if announced simultaneously by the Israelis and the Palestinians, will provide the right conditions for reaching a comprehensive peace with all the Arab parties.

Ninth: To facilitate the "post-occupation" phase, the recognised leadership of the Palestinian people, the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO), should be given its natural role in the negotiations, and be allowed to oversee the implementation of such suggested economic and political developments in the West Bank and Gaza. This will allow for an end to the anomalous separation of the problems of the called Palestinians and their brothers in the occupied territories. Reaching a just solution of the Palestinian refugees based on international legitimacy would also help assuage Israel's security concerns.

In the absence of such a solution for all the occupied territories, the powder-keg known as Gaza will explode. In such an event, even the type of impressive cordon sanitaire which may Israelis are envisaging will prove useless because any major war will inevitably spread to the West Bank. If Israel fails to act on growing calls for withdrawal and tries to keep a tight lid on the occupied territories whilst further dragging-out the faltering peace process, the situation will inevitably deteriorate further.

It is imperative that voices of reason prevail and a humane, just and constructive solution be found. Given the worsening situation in Gaza at present, the time for such a solution is now, for tomorrow...

The writer is General Director of the Jerusalem Centre for Development Studies. He contributed the above article to the Jordan Times.

House panel to probe 'violations'

(Continued from page 1)

urged the institutionalisation of effective mechanisms to curb the practice.

These included a proposal to strip ministers of their authority to fill vacant positions and restricting decisions on civil service appointments to the Civil Service Commission.

Some lawmakers insisted that officials responsible for the violations be held accountable while others said the charges provide a sufficient ground for withholding confidence from the government even though no such motion was presented to the House.

The government admitted cases of illegal hiring but reminded deputies of the social pressure exercised by all at times of appointments.

Acting Prime Minister and Minister of Education Thouqan Al Hindawi attributed these violations to current legislation allowing the employment of civil servants through more than one government agency.

Pointing to recent instructions by Prime Minister Sharif Zeid Ben Shaker to reform the employment system, Mr. Hindawi urged deputies to change legislation that led to unfair hiring practices under a legal cover by making a law restricting the authority to employ civil servants to the Civil Service Commission.

His recommendation, which was also proposed by the special committee on unfair appointments, was endorsed by the House.

The committee's report, however, came under fire from deputies who felt targeted by its findings.

No final decision on peace talks

(Continued from page 1)

and wait till the picture is clear," Dr. Abu Jaber told Petra.

According to the foreign minister, the meeting discussed the expellees issue, and Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin's talks with American leaders in Washington.

The gathering also reviewed "all issues related to the peace process," he was quoted as saying.

Dr. Abu Jaber said the current phase was crucial for the peace process, "particularly if we view the expellees issue and the obstacles it poses."

Mr. Musa of Egypt stressed that the expellees issue still constitutes an obstacle to peace. "We will work on continuing the efforts to overcome it in a time that permits the resumption of the peace process in a better atmosphere which will be more suitable to reach an agreement," he said.

Arab diplomats said the Damascus meeting was unlikely to produce a solid position regarding participation in the peace process, leaving final announcements for their leaders at a later stage.

Lawmakers who had held cabinet positions said the report was incomplete and did not verify the government data on which it was based.

Former Minister of Public Works Abdul Raouf Al Rawabdeh challenged the committee, which reported illegal appointments during his term, to substantiate one "major" violation.

Abdul Karim Al Dughmi, who had served as Minister of Labour as well as of Municipal Affairs and the Environment, said "false" reports of unlawful hirings during his term were based on incorrect information provided by persons who wanted to settle scores with him.

Deputy Ali Al Fiqar said the government was not taking Parliament seriously, others claimed that violations have continued to exist even after the issue was raised by the House more than a month ago.

Deputy Mansour Murad said he holds Sharif Zeid responsible for breaking a ban on appointments till the end of May.

He said the Civil Service Commission president had told him he had violated the ban upon written instructions from Sharif Zeid who ordered the appointment of 47 employees in the Ministry of Justice.

Mr. Hindawi said the appointments were necessitated by the opening of seven courts in various parts of the Kingdom and were required under the recommendation of the justice minister who said the new employees were needed to man the new courts.

He added that the commission was left with the task of selecting the employees in accordance with the law.

Mr. Hindawi said the ban was

specifically introduced by the prime minister to guard against potential unfair hiring before an expected Cabinet reshuffle in April.

During its four-hour session, the House also ended a fierce confrontation between Minister of Agriculture Fayez Khasawneh and Chairman of the Agriculture Committee Mohammad Alawneh over agricultural policy by recommending to the government the establishment of a special body to discuss agricultural policy in the Kingdom.

Before the House cast its vote in favour of establishing the council, Mr. Alawneh claimed the country's agricultural policy was imposed by foreigners who wanted to keep "Jordan under their control."

Rejecting Mr. Khasawneh's contention that Jordan cannot reach self-sufficiency in agriculture, Mr. Alawneh asserted that Mr. Khasawneh "has no field knowledge of the situation in Jordan because he has been in the country for six years only and was working as an academician."

The statement promoted Mr. Hindawi to warn against attacking the person of the agriculture minister, demanding that Mr. Alawneh's statement be deleted from the House's records.

Raising another controversial issue, Deputy Fares Al Nabulsi demanded more government action to secure the release of Jordanians detained in Syria for years.

The House did not discuss the issue but Speaker Abdul Latif Arabiyat said it could be debated in a secret session which the House will hold Monday to discuss the Kingdom's foreign policy, the peace process and the Shabab Al Nafar Al Islami case among other issues.

While officially taking hard-line stands on all issues related to the Israeli-Palestinian relationship, Hamas officials privately concede that they would participate in Palestinian politics if a state came into being in the still-occupied Palestinian lands.

In fact Hamas officials have gone on record as saying they would participate in elections and other politics in a Palestinian state in the West Bank, Gaza and East Jerusalem.

Critics accuse Hamas of playing a two-track political game. "On the one hand they are militants who will not accept a two-state solution and will use jihad as their weapon to fight such a solution," said a Palestinian political analyst in Amman.

"On the other hand they say they would participate in elections in the name of the opposition to the status quo," Hamas' willingness to participate in elections — be they union, municipal or legislative — in the occupied territories is seen as a political move aimed mainly at obtaining power rather than participating in a pure "Islamic" quest to liberate Palestine.

Despite the PLO lead-

Contradictions mar PLO-Hamas quest

(Continued from page 1)

organisation's goal.

"Hamas is changing from a slogan-oriented, semi-militant group to a political creature," said a Palestinian political analyst who is close to Hamas.

"Their goal now is to win points with the populace. Like the Muslim Brotherhood in Jordan they want to win at the ballot box," the observer said.

By taking hard-line popular positions Hamas continues to impress the populace with its "principled stands and positions," the observer added.

But social/educational changes rather than political changes will be the main victories that Hamas will be able to attain in the occupied territories.

Politically one problem is that the PLO and the PLO-backed negotiating team have been unable to come up with one breakthrough on any level in their talks with the Israelis.

"Despite the tremendous amount of concessions offered by the Palestinian negotiators the Israelis have not even said that they accept U.N. resolutions 242 and 338 as relevant basis for their negotiations with the Palestinians. That is like saying you want to write but you don't accept the alphabet," the Palestinian analyst said.

Israel has said that the U.N. resolutions 242 and 338 are of reference and not necessarily the basis for its vision of a peace settlement.

In recent days, Hamas has made increasingly contradictory statements and is seen as taking a multi-track approach to Palestinian politics.

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Despite the PLO lead-

ership's acceptance of a staged return of the 396 Palestinian expellees in southern Lebanon, Hamas continues to say it will not accept a phased return of the exiles under any circumstances.

"We would like to stress again that we will not accept a phased return. We will accept what the United Nations Resolution 799 implicitly calls for, which is an immediate and collective return of the expellees," said head of the Hamas mission to Jordan Mohammad Nazzari in an interview this week.

The statement comes in response to statements by the PLO-backed Palestinian peace negotiators that if Israel commits itself to doing away with the policy of expulsion and applies resolution 242 and 338 in its dealings with the Palestinians then a phased return of the expellees would be acceptable.

Hamas insists, however, that "under no conditions" would it find a phased return as acceptable. "We insist that they go back together and immediately," said Mr. Nazzari.

Linkages to conditions affecting the peace process, according to Mr. Nazzari, are "irrelevant" since "Hamas rejects the peace process in principle."

The PLO and Hamas, while still on speaking terms, have effectively frozen a four-month-old dialogue between their leaderships.

Hamas is the only Palestinian group of consequence which does not come under the umbrella of the PLO. It has thus far refused to concede to PLO conditions which could make it a member of the Palestine National Council, the Palestinian parliament-in-exile.

"Our dialogue is not publicly frozen but it is effectively on hold," said Mr. Nazzari. Hamas accuses PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat of personally ordering the hold on the talks in order to "protect the Palestinian leadership from answering to a more pluralistic constituency."

"Mr. Arafat wants us to remain silent, not to question his decisions," Mr. Nazzari

said, adding that Hamas had become fully aware of the hold on the dialogue when a meeting between the Hamas representatives in Amman and a senior PLO official was called off March 8.

"We realised then that the PLO leadership in Tunis was not interested in continuing the PLO-Hamas dialogue," said the Hamas official.

Pro-peace talks PLO activists in the Arafat camp have been urging Mr. Arafat to call off the talks with Hamas for months.

"They abused the expellee crisis and wanted to direct Palestinian politics by virtue of the expellee dilemma," said a Tunis-based member of Mr. Arafat's inner circle who guides peace negotiators from abroad.

"We had been calling on the chairman to stop them (Hamas) in their tracks for months before he actually did it," said the advisor in a telephone interview from Tunis. He spoke on condition of anonymity.

What broke the straw on the camel's back was not the use of the expellee crisis by Hamas, however, said member of the Palestine Central Council who is based in Amman.

"When they started their diplomatic manoeuvring with the Western governments they sowed a wedge between us," said the PCC, a member of Mr. Arafat's Fatah faction.

While Hamas insists that its contacts with representatives of governments of Italy, Germany, Britain, Spain and China in February as well as earlier low-level contacts with a member of the U.S. embassy political bureau in Amman were not aimed at undermining the status of the PLO, the leadership in Tunis does not see it as such.

Hamas claims that its contacts were meant to exert further pressure on the West to help in the return of the expellees, many of whom are affiliated to Hamas, and to campaign against an increasing lobby in the U.S. which wants Hamas labelled as a terrorist organisation.

Hamas, PLO members say, accuses the PLO of trying to undermine its organisation by

shelving a dialogue between the two but it will refuse any terms which the PLO offers to join the PNC.

"If they join the PNC they will be implicated in the results of the peace process and that's what they don't want," Mamdouh Nofal, a Tunis-based Arafat aide, told the Jordan Times. "They want to be outside this realm so that when there are elections in the occupied territories they can say 'you got a bad deal and we had nothing to do with it — it was the PLO,'" he said.

While Hamas rejects the contention that it harbours such "devious" intentions, its leaders continue to refuse the 12 seats on the PNC offered to them by the PLO. They say free elections are the only measure which they will accept as to their strength among the Palestinian constituents.

Hamas claims that 25 to 35 per cent of all Palestinians in the occupied territories support Hamas. It, like the PLO, rejects the findings of a recent opinion poll taken in the occupied territories by the Jerusalem Media and Communications Centre, an independent Palestinian organisation in Jerusalem.

The state does not yet exist but the PLO and Hamas are locked in a battle for power which will lead us into a very uncertain path," concludes the Palestinian political analyst.

Yeltsin, rival survive congress fury

(Continued from page 1)

talks late Saturday night.

Sunday's dramatic developments began with a surprise announcement of the compromise as the congress convened for the third day of its emergency session in the Grand Kremlin Palace.

"We were able to find basic principles upon which we can make our way out of this deadlock," Mr. Khasbulatov said, as Mr. Yeltsin sat behind him on the podium.

But a parade of spokesmen for various parliamentary factions quickly took the podium to denounce the deal.

"Yesterday you said Russia has grown tired of us. Probably that's true but excuse me, we've grown tired of you," headline leader Vladimir Isakov told Mr. Khasbulatov.

Congress voted 687-130, with 31 abstentions, to reject the compromise. Hardline lawmaker Vladimir Isakov then proposed removing both Mr. Yeltsin and Mr. Khasbulatov from their posts.

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JORDAN NATIONAL BANK	48,200	1,000	1,000	1,000
INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT BANK	1,920	3,800	3,800	3,800
THE HOUSING BANK	27,800	1,940	2,000	2,000
JORDAN INVESTMENT BANK	1,120	2,500	2,500	2,500
AMMAN INVESTMENT BANK	2,920	5,480	5,450	5,450
JORDAN ISLAMIC BANK	10,400	4,000	4,000	4,000
UNION BANK FOR SAVING & INVESTMENT	4,200	4,270	4,270	4,270
INDUSTRIAL BANK	11,100	2,200	2,170	2,180
AMMAN INVESTMENT & FINANCE BANK	1,720	4,400	4,250	4,300
JORDAN BANK FOR INVESTMENT	26,700	1,700	1,700	1,700
JORDAN BANK FOR INVESTMENT	4,010	2,800	2,750	2,750
JORDAN BANK FOR INVESTMENT	14,470	4,180	4,140	4,170
JORDAN BANK FOR INVESTMENT	4,400	3,400	3,400	3,400
JORDAN BANK FOR INVESTMENT	480	4,200	4,500	4,500
JORDAN BANK FOR INVESTMENT	1,570	3,200	3,150	3,220
JORDAN BANK FOR INVESTMENT	17,870	2,100	2,120	2,110
JORDAN BANK FOR INVESTMENT	2,200	1,200	1,200	1,200
JORDAN BANK FOR INVESTMENT	120,234	1,800	1,800	1,800
JORDAN BANK FOR INVESTMENT	14,410	1,600	1,600	1,600
JORDAN BANK FOR INVESTMENT	17,517	0,010	0,010	0,010
JORDAN BANK FOR INVESTMENT	16,430	1,370	1,370	1,370
JORDAN BANK FOR INVESTMENT	520	1,500	1,500	1,500
JORDAN BANK FOR INVESTMENT	10,420	1,440	1,440	1,440
JORDAN BANK FOR INVESTMENT	26,730	2,370	2,350	2,320
JORDAN BANK FOR INVESTMENT	14,740	2,000	1,980	1,980
JORDAN BANK FOR INVESTMENT	20,420	4,000	4,000	4,000
JORDAN BANK FOR INVESTMENT	14,400	10,070	10,070	10,070
JORDAN BANK FOR INVESTMENT	2,950	3,000	2,950	2,950
JORDAN BANK FOR INVESTMENT	8,720	6,100	6,050	6,000
JORDAN BANK FOR INVESTMENT	4,900	9,000	9,000	9,000
JORDAN BANK FOR INVESTMENT	16,370	7,100	7,100	7,030
JORDAN BANK FOR INVESTMENT	10,070	10,070	10,070	10,070
JORDAN BANK FOR INVESTMENT	934	3,010	3,040	3,020
JORDAN BANK FOR INVESTMENT	790	3,150	3,180	3,180
JORDAN BANK FOR INVESTMENT	16,430	3,580	3,580	3,580
JORDAN BANK FOR INVESTMENT	40,750	12,500	12,250	12,250
JORDAN BANK FOR INVESTMENT	10,750	1,500	1,500	1,500
JORDAN BANK FOR INVESTMENT	262,914	14,500	14,500	14,350
JORDAN BANK FOR INVESTMENT	105,760	0,070	0,070	0,070
JORDAN BANK FOR INVESTMENT	14,400	1,500	1,500	1,500
JORDAN BANK FOR INVESTMENT	3,720	1,800	1,700	1,780
JORDAN BANK FOR INVESTMENT	16,430	0,500	0,500	0,500
JORDAN BANK FOR INVESTMENT	44,130	6,100	6,150	6,080
JORDAN BANK FOR INVESTMENT	4,710	0,970	0,970	0,970
JORDAN BANK FOR INVESTMENT	14,900	4,200	4,250	4,230
JORDAN BANK FOR INVESTMENT	2,130	5,400	5,350	5,330
JORDAN BANK FOR INVESTMENT	790	1,800	1,800	1,800
JORDAN BANK FOR INVESTMENT	20,517	14,250	14,200	14,140
JORDAN BANK FOR INVESTMENT	12,070	1,210	1,210	1,210
JORDAN BANK FOR INVESTMENT	26,000	0,640	0,640	0,640
JORDAN BANK FOR INVESTMENT	11,520	9,000	9,000	8,970
JORDAN BANK FOR INVESTMENT	11,510	1,750	1,750	1,750
JORDAN BANK FOR INVESTMENT	11,130	4,400	4,400	4,420
JORDAN BANK FOR INVESTMENT	4,400	1,740	1,740	1,740
JORDAN BANK FOR INVESTMENT	24,234	5,760	5,730	5,700
TOTAL	2,164,532			

Jordan, EC do business at Bari

AMMAN — "Jordan earnestly wishes to strengthen its relations with the European Community," says Dr. Mahdi Al Farhan, Director of the Jordan Investment Corporation (JIC), and events such as the recent Euroforum in Bari, Italy, are an ideal way of doing it.

The JIC and five private sector companies participated in the event which brought more than 1500 firms from over 40 European countries and from neighbouring Mediterranean countries together to explore the possibilities of forming business partnerships of all kinds.

Dr. Farhan says the Jordanian participants in the Bari event were impressed with its organization and with the results of their own meetings.

The Jordanian acquaintance with Euroforum began with a September 1992 invitation to participate in what has previously been a largely European Community (EC) event but is now one which welcomes participants from the Mediterranean countries and from eastern Europe.

They were invited to a meeting with the Bari organizers arranged through the Italian embassy in Amman, and were provided with a catalogue giving full details of the 386 Italian firms participating. They were thus able to choose those with whom they would like to make appointments well in advance of the event.

When they arrived in Bari and could visit the company stands, they could see for themselves what the Italian companies had to offer and could make further appointments if they wished.

Dr. Farhan says he was to find that the Jordanians also had their own stand, equipped with a computer terminal with full details of the participating companies, and that the JIC staff were Jordan's "representative" at Bari. It was a role they were happy to take on especially as the private sector representatives were "totally occupied" with their own appointments.

The Agricultural Marketing and Processing Company (AMPCO) has now gone further than just meetings and is inviting offers from Italian companies for a new tomato processing plant.

Since his return from Italy, Dr. Farhan says he has learned that some 44 per cent of the companies at Bari were from the EC while 56 per cent were from the EFTA countries, Eastern Europe and the Mediterranean, a clear sign that it is becoming a regional event of increasing importance to non-EC companies trying to find a place in Europe.

With the success of Bari in mind, the JIC is now considering the next Euroforum which will take place in Lille, France in June — EC Newsletter.



Yugoslav citizens with foreign currency savings in Belgrade banks protest in front of the federal government building after it was announced that their deposits would be used to repay the public debt. The savers demanded money back or state guarantees for their deposits (AFP photo)



Louis Gerstner (left), new chief executive of International Business Machines (IBM) corporation, and John Akers, the former chief executive, pose for a photo after a news conference. The conference was called to announce that Mr. Gerstner would head the 79-year-old and the world's biggest computer company (AFP photo)

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Kuwait mulls giving debtors incentive to pay

KUWAIT (R) — Borrowers involved in Kuwait's festering \$20 billion bad debt problem should receive unspecified "incentives" to repay immediately at least part of what they owe, parliament's finance committee said Saturday.

The 9,546 borrowers include many of the emirate's major business concerns, most of which are represented by the chamber of commerce.

The committee of the opposition-dominated National Assembly made the recommendation after meeting chamber of commerce and industry officials to discuss a plan to bail commercial banks out of their chronic debt problems.

Worries over the 11-year-old issue have helped keep the economy stagnant despite a post-Gulf war revival in oil revenues and big spending on the repair of war-damaged oilfields.

Economists say long-term economic revival is impossible without a solution to the problem, which stems from the 1982 collapse of the Souq Al Manakh

unofficial stock market. A small minority of the borrowers — 2.5 per cent — owe a staggering 68 per cent of the debt. The committee said in a statement that Saturday's meeting had discussed possible solutions for advancing the delayed second phase of a plan to solve the problem.

In the first phase, the government last year swapped \$20 billion of the banks' portfolios of dubious loans for rock-solid but low-yielding treasury bonds which mature in 20 years.

Under the second phase, debtors are meant to disclose their financial positions to the central bank while repayment terms are agreed by parliament in cooperation with government.

Few have made disclosures because under current proposals repayment terms are linked to assets, a condition that has encouraged big borrowers to keep funds parked safely abroad.

Central bank officials have said the problem is so large that few of

the borrowers are expected to repay 100 per cent. Saturday's statement, carefully skirting around the notion of debt forgiveness, said any solution had to categorise the debtors according to how much they owed and offer them the chance to repay some of their debts immediately.

The statement, listing issues where it said the two bodies' points of view had coincided, said the meeting had approved "the principle of immediate repayment by finding incentives, to provide more than one (repayment) alternative for a debtor."

The statement did not elaborate on the notion of incentives beyond saying such payments could be in instalments over a limited number of years.

But last week the chamber proposed a tiered solution to the problem that would involve in effect forgiving the debts of the 4,740 smallest borrowers — those owing less than 20,000 dinars (\$66,000) — while requiring partial repayments from the rest.

Land prices are still too steep for most Japanese

TOKYO (AP) — The good news that Japan's super inflated land prices fell for the second straight year last year have drawn a collective snort of skepticism.

Headlines in major newspapers declared that owning a house, or even an apartment, was still "a dream among dreams."

A national land agency study showed that a new 70 square metre condominium still costs six and a half times an average person's annual income.

That's down from a peak of 8.5 times in 1990. But it's nowhere near Prime Minister Kiichi Miyazawa's promise of making homes available at five times a worker's income.

"Prices are still far from the reach of the average consumer," said Tokunobu Hasegawa, an analyst at the Research Institute of Construction and Economy. Residential land prices fell by an average 8.7 per cent in 1992, according to the land agency's study of 20,555 sites throughout

the nation. A square metre of the most expensive residential land, near the Imperial Palace in downtown Tokyo, was still steep at 8.5 million yen (\$73,000), although it had fallen nearly 25 per cent from a year earlier.

The Yomiuri, the largest national newspaper, reflected widespread sentiment when it said that most home buyers compromise on quality for lower prices and still "are stuck with a small, distant home."

Because of a lack of affordable housing inside the city, most Tokyoites commute for several hours a day on jam-packed trains running to distant suburbs. Many families live in shoddy, cramped apartments that have earned the name "rabbit hutch," barely larger than the size of a spacious American living room, that cost up to half a million dollars.

"I say it's not good enough to get rabbit hatches. One deserves a room of one's own," said Mr. Hasegawa.

The declines follow the bursting of Japan's excessive "bubble economy" of the late 1980s, when easy credit led to a speculative boom in real estate, stocks and other investments.

Analysts say evidence of the bubble remains. "It must be said that land prices are still too much," an editorial in the national Asahi newspaper concluded.

China to upgrade education for sake of economy

BEIJING (R) — China plans to revamp its education system, which has been neglected in the nation's search for economic prosperity, the China Daily has said.

A sweeping plan sponsored by the Communist Party and the State Council (cabinet) to improve the educational level of China's 1.17 billion people has been introduced, it said.

"The low educational standard of industrial workers has become one of the main obstacles to China's economic take-off and is also hindering the full use and protection of the country's national resources," it said. Schools, under state control since the communist takeover in 1949, will be given more control over the curriculum and administration.

"The government will play only a guiding role in legislation, funding, general planning, information services and policy," the newspaper said.

Students will be encouraged to complete nine years of schooling, it said. The government will raise teachers' salaries. Wages of university lecturers and school teachers have remained pitifully low while incomes in private business have skyrocketed since economic reforms began in the late 1980s.

Financial Markets

Foreign Exchange Market Summary (March 22 — March 26, 1993)

AMMAN — Dollar exchange rates fluctuated within a narrow range against European currencies last week. The Japanese unit, on the other hand, surged early in the week to an all time high of around 115 yen to the dollar, before falling back. The U.S. unit thus finished the week little changed from the previous week.

The main feature of trading activity was the lack of consensus among market participants over the short term direction of exchange rates. Market reports reflected marked uncertainty over the implications of the political turmoil in Russia and over Bundesbank plans for German interest rates in the short term, as well as the absence of new substantive economic information. Trading was thus inspired by speculative and technical considerations, causing exchange rates to fluctuate without clear direction. Book-buying before the end of the first quarter further discouraged traders from adopting the end of the first quarter further discouraged traders from adopting new positions.

A surge in Tokyo stock prices pushed the Nikkei index to a 1993 closing high Monday, feeding through into a yen rally against the dollar. The U.S. unit thus fell to 115 yen during Tokyo trading hours, before closing at 115.65 yen in New York. But the yen started to ease on profit-taking as of late Tuesday, falling to 117.54 yen to the dollar by the close of New York Wednesday. Speculative demand for the yen was deterred by fears of intervention by the Bank of Japan, a threat that was spelled-out by the Japanese finance minister, in addition to an evolving perception that Japan's major trading partners, the G-7 countries, will seek to reduce their trade deficit with Japan by means other than a constantly rising yen. This came after a barrage of conflicting hints and comments by U.S. President Clinton on the one side, and U.S. treasury undersecretary-designate and senior Japanese officials on the other. Technical consideration further accentuated the yen's decline.

As for the dollar-mark, a major issue was whether the Bundesbank was going to allow market interest rates to fall, and more importantly, over the timing of the next interest rate cut. A decision by the Bundesbank to set a variable rate Repo tender Tuesday was perceived by traders to be a subtle way of reducing speculative pressure on the mark. In another development, the Bundesbank cut the three-day treasury bill rate Thursday, to match the discount rate at per cent. Although the move was largely technical and had no particular significance in itself, traders took it as a signal that the Bundesbank would allow money market rates to ease as well. The dollar thus closed at 1.6430 marks, its highest level of the week.

Uncertainty over the short-term direction of exchange rates led to divergent expectations towards the end of the week. While technical analysts believe the dollar will witness a set-back, many market participants are awaiting the results of the next Bundesbank council meeting on Thursday April, and U.S. employment data the next day, to provide clearer direction.

New York Closing Rates for Major Currencies Against the U.S. Dollar

Currency	19/3/1993	26/3/1993	Percent Change
British Pound	1.4900	1.4870	0.20%
Deutsche Mark	1.6379	1.6335	0.15%
Swiss Franc	1.5085	1.5133	0.32%
French Franc	6.4690	6.4540	0.27%
Japanese Yen	116.00	116.55	0.47%

Central Bank of Jordan Exchange Rate Bulletin

Currency	Bid	Offer
U.S. Dollar	0.6880	0.6900
Sterling Pound	1.0770	1.0771
Deutsche Mark	0.4711	0.4727
Swiss Franc	0.4546	0.4549
French Franc	0.1758	0.1761
Japanese Yen	0.0063	0.0064
Dutch Guilder	0.5715	0.5761
Swedish Krona	6.0889	0.0893
Italian Lira	0.0130	0.0132
Belgian Franc	0.07041	0.07041

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Truce holds in snowy Bosnia

Izetbegovic gives Serbs 10-15 days

SARAJEVO (AP) — Snow apparently helped a ceasefire take hold across war-ravaged Bosnia Sunday as U.N. officials made a fresh attempt to get aid through to the desperate eastern enclave of Srebrenica.

The ceasefire agreed upon for noon (1000 GMT) across Bosnia-Herzegovina followed two of the quietest days of the year-old war, slightly raising hopes it might stick, unlike previous truces.

More than 130,000 people have been killed or are missing in the war, and about 2 million have been displaced from their homes, according to government figures.

Just five minutes before the truce, a spate shelling near the presidency building in downtown Sarajevo killed three people and badly injured five, Bosnian Radio said.

Seven shells hit the airport in the northeastern town of Tuzla just after noon, damaging two helicopters, said British Maj. Martin Waters of the local U.N. peacekeeping force.

The U.N. command in Kiseljak, just outside Sarajevo, otherwise reported no ceasefire violations by mid-afternoon. Belgrade Radio also said all was quiet.

Bad weather may have helped halt the fighting. Snowfall slowed midday Sunday in Sarajevo after 60 hours without pause. Much of Bosnia was three feet deep in snow.

The cold worsened conditions in Srebrenica, where tens of thousands of people are trapped, many without shelter, food or warm clothing.

Louis Gendle, a U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) field officer in Srebrenica, told colleagues in Sarajevo that many people were on the verge of dying and thousands needed hospitalisation.

Bosnian President Alija Izetbegovic, returning from U.N. peace talks in New York where he reluctantly signed an international peace plan, said he did so because he saw no alternative.

The plan "is indeed a very bad one, but other plans are even worse," he told reporters in Zagreb, Croatia.

But he said he would withdraw his signature if the Bosnian Serbs, the only holdouts, did not agree to the plan in 10 to 15 days. The Bosnian Serbs are to debate their stance at a parliament session later this week.

The military commanders of the warring Serb, Muslim and Croat factions are due to meet only on April 6 to discuss demilitarisation if the ceasefire holds until then.

Under the peace plan, tens of thousands of peacekeeping soldiers would be needed to monitor the division of Bosnia-Herzegovina into 10 largely autonomous provinces.

Mr. Izetbegovic, who met U.S. Vice President Al Gore in Washington, said America would impose "unprecedented isolation" on Serbia if the Bosnian Serbs do not sign.

Serbian President Slobodan Milosevic is widely seen as the main instigator of the war that erupted after Bosnia's Muslims and Croats voted for independence from Yugoslavia last March.

Bosnia's Serbs, armed and supplied from Serbia, revolted and now hold 70 per cent of the territory. The peace plan they reject would give them just 43 per cent.

With Serbia's economy already reeling under international sanctions imposed last May, Mr. Milosevic now appears eager to play peacemaker.

He arranged talks Friday between U.N. commanders and Bosnian Serb Commander Gen. Ratko Mladic, resulting in Sunday's ceasefire.

Hopes for the truce had dimmed Saturday when the Bosnian Serbs broke Gen. Mladic's promise of safe passage for a convoy of food and medicine for Srebrenica led by French Gen. Philippe Morillon, U.N. commander for Bosnia.

That convoy left Belgrade Sunday. One truck crashed en route because of bad weather, and the convoy reached the Bosnian-Serbian border only in the afternoon, UNHCR officials said.

Gen. Morillon has been based in Srebrenica for almost 2½ weeks, shutting in and out for talks to try and save the town from a Serb onslaught. He was in Pale, the Bosnian Serbs' headquarters, Sunday, U.N. officials said.

56 killed in S. Korea train accident

SEOUL (Agencies) — At least 56 passengers were killed and 110 were injured Sunday when an express train careered off the rails in South Korea, state television said.

Victims were rushed to hospitals and a rescue team, using bulldozers, was still searching the wreckage of the coaches for possible survivors.

Rain-soaked ground under the tracks collapsed, and two cars overturned and crumbled into the hole, officials added.

The train was carrying some 620 people in six cars, about 100 more than its seating capacity, said Yonhap, South Korea's national news agency.

Police said the train was nearing its terminal in the southern city of Pusan on the trunk line from Seoul when it derailed at about 0800 GMT.

Dozens of passengers were trapped in the overturned cars, Yonhap said. Some passengers were heard groaning inside a crumpled car as workers with heavy equipment tried to rescue them, it added.

Television footage showed bodies and debris tangled under the cars.

Belgian king under pressure to act on crisis

BRUSSELS (R) — Belgium's King Baudouin, caught between complex politics and the burden of the country's huge debt, is under pressure to resolve a six-day-old government crisis.

Belgian newspapers and analysts said the Belgian franc could weaken if the crisis persists.

"Politicians are very sensitive that the franc will come under speculative attack," Peter Praet, chief economist at Generale Bank NV, said on Belgian Television.

But some commentators said the delay in a decision by the king whether to accept the government's resignation, offered Tuesday, indicated there were behind-the-scenes talks among the coalition partners on a face-saving compromise that will keep them in power.

The daily Le Soir said there might be a minor cabinet reshuffle, with the replacement of the Budget Minister Mieke Beelers and the outspoken Social Affairs Minister Philippe Moureaux. Government officials declined to comment.

The ruling parties, Christian Democrats and Socialists from both the French speaking south and the Flemish speaking north, do not want new elections as they are performing badly in the opinion polls.

"I think this crisis is a reflection of the internal problems of the coalition partners," Xavier Mabille, director of the Belgian political think tank Centre de Recherche Et D'information Socio-Politique, said on Belgian Television.

King Baudouin had three hours of talks Friday with Prime Minister Jean Luc Dehaene.

Pretoria 'considers future' of homelands

JOHANNESBURG (R) — South Africa's government is considering a plan to end the "independence" of three black homelands and bring them back under the rule of Pretoria, a Johannesburg newspaper said Sunday.

The Sunday Times said President F.W. de Klerk faces a mutiny within his ruling National Party over the defiant attitude of Transkei's military ruler Major General Bantu Holomisa.

Gen. Holomisa has accused South African military and political leaders of being involved in coup and assassination plots against him and other black homeland leaders.

His statements, in which he also warned he would use military force to keep South African security units out of his territory, have enraged Mr. de Klerk.

Gen. Holomisa, responding to the article in the Transkei capital Umtata, said any plan to end the homelands' independence would mean "the end of the road" for the National Party government.

Government spokesman David Steward told Reuters: "The Sunday Times story is based completely on unfounded speculation."

Establishment of 10 homelands for blacks was a keystone of racial segregation policies during 40 years of apartheid rule.

The homelands of Transkei, Ciskei, Venda and Bophuthatswana, are nominally independent but recognised only by Pretoria.

The Sunday Times said the plan involving the takeover of the administration of Transkei, Ciskei and Venda would be put to a multi-party conference opening in Johannesburg Thursday to negotiate South Africa's transition to non-racial democracy.

It made no mention of Bophuthatswana, the most viable of the homelands, but discussions were likely to take place between Pretoria and the territories ruled by Lucas Mangope.

A commission headed by Judge Richard Goldstone appointed by the government in 1991 to investigate the causes of violence in the country said in a report last week the guerrilla Azanian People's Liberation Army (APLA) had used Transkei as a base and transit route for attacks on whites in South Africa.

The government has accused APLA, a Tanzanian-based military wing of radical Pan-Africanist Congress (PAC), of targeting and killing whites.

The homelands are dependent on Pretoria for their economic survival. But the end of apartheid has disclosed massive waste and corruption in the homelands, angering many white South Africans whose tax money is used to prop-up their governments.

The African National Congress (ANC) has said the homeland were a relic of apartheid and should be unified with South Africa.

But the ANC Sunday rejected any unilateral attempt by the government to force reincorporation of the Transkei.

"We are all in favour of reincorporation, but not into an apartheid South Africa," said ANC Information Director Pallo Jordan. He said such an attempt would wreck democracy talks.



LI REELECTED: Premier Li Peng (right) is congratulated by new Chinese President Jiang Zemin (left) after Mr. Li was named to a second five-year term Saturday. As expected, National People's Congress overwhelmingly approved Mr. Li's nomination (AFP photo)

WORLD NEWS IN BRIEF

ANC expects 53% in all-race election

HERMANUS, South Africa (R) — The African National Congress expects to win at least 53 per cent of the vote in South Africa's first all race election with support from up to 70 per cent of blacks and only two per cent of whites, ANC election coordinator Ketso Gordhan said Saturday. Mr. Gordhan told reporters at a conference in Hermanus, near Cape Town, that the movement, legalised in 1990 after 30 years of underground opposition to apartheid, planned to field about 180,000 volunteers ahead of the poll expected before the end of April next year. He said the ANC expected President F.W. de Klerk's ruling National Party to emerge as the second biggest party with about 20 per cent of the national vote and a majority of votes from the white minority. South Africa has a total population of about 35 million, including about five million whites. The ANC expects about 21 million people to qualify for the first all-race election. Mr. Gordhan said the ANC would fight the election in alliance with the South African Communist Party and the Congress of South African Trade Unions, but that candidates from those parties would owe their allegiance to the ANC first.

Aspin unveils defence budget

WASHINGTON (AP) — Defence Secretary Les Aspin unveiled President Bill Clinton's slimmed-down, \$263.4 billion military budget Saturday, portraying it as a "very cautious" blueprint that preserves many Reagan-Bush era weapons systems. Reductions of 108,000 in active duty military and a pay freeze account for much of Mr. Clinton's defence cuts in the spending plan for the fiscal year beginning Oct. 1. The overall fiscal 1994 budget is about \$10 billion less than this year's level — and some \$12 billion short of what former President George Bush envisioned for the post-cold war era. Over a four-year period, Mr. Clinton plans to cut defence spending by \$88 billion, an increase from the \$60 billion reduction he pledged during the presidential campaign. Left unanswered was the fate of most major weapons programmes, including future development of tactical aircraft for the air force and navy, a light helicopter for the army and an attack submarine. Mr. Aspin is reserving judgment on those programmes, as well as scores of others, pending the results of a major review slated for this summer.

Bomb damages new German prison

DARMSTADT, Germany (AP) — A bomb exploded at a newly constructed prison in Darmstadt Saturday, seriously damaging the building but causing no injuries. Police said leftist Red Army Faction terrorists were suspected. Darmstadt police said the bomb exploded at about 5 a.m. (0400 GMT) at the entrance of the prison administration building, after the attackers tied up two guards and eight prison employees. It was not immediately clear how many attackers took part, police said. The prison was to have opened in less than a week. Police said the attack caused an estimated 100 million marks (\$61 million) in damage.

New fighting erupts in Karabakh

MOSCOW (AP) — Nagorno-Karabakh Armenians and Azerbaijan plunged into a new round of warfare over the disputed region, with both sides reporting heavy shelling and many casualties, news agencies said. Nagorno-Karabakh officials claimed that Azerbaijani forces pounded villages in the enclave Friday in preparation for a ground assault Saturday, the Interfax News Agency said. It said fighting was fiercest Saturday in the Keladjar and Mardakert regions of Nagorno Karabakh. The Azerbaijani Defence Ministry claimed in a separate statement that Armenian forces had started the assault by shelling Azerbaijani villages outside the territory, Interfax reported.

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Military must keep leading role — Burmese leader

RANGOON (AP) — The head of the country's ruling junta has said the military has no intention of keeping sole power, but must retain a leading role in national politics to prevent instability.

Gen. Than Shwe, leader of the ruling State Law and Order Restoration Council, pledged in a speech that the military will "systematically retransfer state power to the people to whom it initially belongs."

The junta has organised a constitutional convention which is now in the process of drafting guidelines for a new charter.

But opponents say the military should first hand over power to the winners of parliamentary elections held in 1990. Pro-democracy leaders, including the elected parliamentarians, have since been killed, jailed or forced into exile by the junta.

The military's most prominent opponent, Aung San Suu Kyi, who won the 1991 Nobel Peace Prize for her nonviolent opposition to the military dictatorship, is now in her fourth year of house arrest in Rangoon. The party she helped found, the National League for Democracy, was the landslide winner of the 1990 election.

Critics of the junta also say the constitutional convention is unrepresentative of pro-democracy parties and ethnic minorities, and point out that its schedule is open ended.

The junta has publicly instructed delegates that a new constitution must reserve a leading role for the military.

Than Shwe, whose comments came in a speech marking Armed Forces Day, described the matter of who should direct national politics as "broad and delicate."

He said the military "is in a position where it cannot shun the duties for preventing the danger of disintegration of the union, disintegration of national solidarity and loss of sovereignty."

The junta established authoritarian control over the country after a September 1988 coup d'état. Before then, the military exercised indirect but strict authority after staging a coup against a parliamentary government in 1962.

Meanwhile, the official Working People's Daily reported Saturday that government forces had killed more than 1,000 rebel soldiers in combat over the past year.

Government troops fought against ethnic Shan, Karenni, and Karen forces and pro-democracy student guerrillas in the eastern, southeastern and southern military regions. They battled forces belonging to the Natchin and Shan ethnic groups in the northern and northwestern regions.

Papers gloat over Andreotti mafia probe

ROME (R) — Italian newspapers reacted Sunday with a mixture of shock and venom to news former Prime Minister Giulio Andreotti is being investigated over suspected mafia links.

Few expressed any doubts about his guilt but most always believed Italy's pre-eminent post-war politician would be too clever to become involved in the country's spreading corruption scandal.

"Yes — even him" announced La Repubblica, incredulously, whilst at the same time carrying a cartoon portraying Mr. Andreotti as a mafia hit man.

The 74-year-old Christian Democrat, seven times prime minister and the Western world's longest political survivor until his semi-retirement last year, announced Saturday that magistrates in the Sicilian capital of Palermo have warned him they believe he has mafia links.

The news electrified Italy, both because of Mr. Andreotti's stature and the nature of the suspected offence.

Most politicians caught up in the year-long scandal are merely accused of taking bribes, from businessmen.

"This is really shattered news — If not entirely unexpected," commented La Stampa.

Rumours have circulated for over 20 years that Mr. Andreotti must be involved with the mafia if only because he has been at the centre of government for so long, several papers noted.

Many played on his traditional sinister image of the spider at the centre of a huge and impenetrable web who must surely know the truth about the decades of conspiracies and mysteries which continue to haunt Italy.

"None, or almost no one, has ever believed in his sincerity or rectitude if only because to survive in politics requires a healthy capacity to tell lies," said La Stampa.

"Andreotti was astute, Machiavellian and experienced — in short a perfect political animal."

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Mr. Andreotti broke the news in a statement in which he said he was bitter but not surprised, after at least four mafia informers named him in testimony to investigators.

"We're not surprised, either, and neither will most ordinary Italians be," commented the left wing daily Il Manifesto, calling Mr. Andreotti the "salmonander of the regime."

"When an entire system is collapsing like this one, even the untouchables are swept away," it added.

In between the gloating, one or two papers found room to ponder the consequences for Italy.

"It is good that at least the truth will be tested before a court of law," said Corriere Della Sera.

"Italian public opinion have somehow accustomed to accusations that one of its premier leaders had links with drug dealers and murderers — and that was not a healthy state of affairs."

"The image of the country is at stake here," it concluded.

Dublin housewife channels Irish anger over IRA

DUBLIN (R) — Dublin housewife Susan McHugh's anger over the IRA killing of a three-year-old child has touched a deep emotional chord in the Irish.

Less than a week after phoning a radio talk show to voice her outrage, she finds herself at the head of a "people power" peace movement crying "enough is enough" after more than 3,000 deaths in the Northern Ireland conflict.

Her emotion charged call tapped a well of Irish anger after the Irish Republican Army (IRA) in a bomb attack killed three-year-old Johnathan Ball on his way to buy a Mother's Day card in the Northern England town of Warrington.

Dublin's Trinity College offered her a hall free of charge and 2,000 people turned up to voice their disgust.

The crowd gave a standing ovation to Gordon Wilson, who touched the hearts of millions around the world when he forgave the IRA bombers who killed his daughter in a 1987 war memorial massacre.

Now the prime mover behind a mass weekend rally in Dublin, Mrs. McHugh has been carried along on a groundswell of support from ordinary people.

She speaks simply of her aims: "I want people to voice their protest in the strongest possible way. It is time to shout stop. Enough is enough."

Mrs. McHugh, who works part time in a Dublin nursery school, said: "When I heard of the bombing I wondered what I would do if

my own children, Emma and Charles, were killed in that way. It does not bear thinking about."

She has become an instant media celebrity. The phone has never stopped ringing. She is constantly doing international television interviews.

But she keeps her feet firmly on the ground: "I am just an ordinary mum with two children, a mortgage and a cat."

However there is no mistaking the fierce conviction in her voice when she insists: "Now is the time for a ceasefire. The alternative is to sit back and do nothing at all and I cannot do that."

Cynics viewing the world's longest running guerrilla conflict talk about people being swayed by "the politics of the last atrocity" and point to the decline of the last great peace movement in the 1970s.

After three children were killed by an IRA getaway car in Belfast, Mairead Corrigan and Betty Williams launched a peace movement that drew tens of thousands onto the streets and won them the Nobel Peace Prize in 1976.

But the movement declined with bickering breaking out among its members and arguments erupting over finance.

People also united on both sides of the border in outrage after the 1987 war memorial massacre in the border town of Enniskillen that took the lives of Gordon Wilson's daughter and 10 other people.

But Mrs. McHugh refuses to be discouraged: "It is time people

stood up and made it clear that this kind of thing cannot be done in our name. Most people in Ireland want nothing at all to do with it."

"I am just an ordinary housewife who is not prepared to stand back and take these murders any longer. The politicians have failed so now it is over to the people to take action."

While families and friends mourned Saturday the slayings of four Roman Catholic workmen by pro British "loyalist" gunmen, politicians and parents kept up pressure for peace in strife torn Northern Ireland.

Three of the construction workers gunned down in the quiet seaside town of Castlerock, 80 kilometres northwest of Belfast, were buried Saturday.

In Dublin, Irish Prime Minister Albert Reynolds said his government was ready to go anywhere at anytime to meet anyone to find a political settlement to the 24 years of troubles in Northern Ireland.

His appeal on BBC Radio 4 followed the killings of the two children in Warrington, northwest England, by two IRA bombs on March 20 and the slaying by loyalists of a Catholic teenager in Belfast Friday, as well as the four construction workers.

A vigil for the two boys was held in Warrington by mothers Against Murder and Aggression. Founder Charlie Rose, 33, called for an end to the violence which took the children's lives.

"It's been a bad week," Mr.

Reynolds said on BBC Radio 4. "But we have to keep trying. We have to try and get people to realise that the end result of violence begets more violence and that is not the way forward."

In Belfast, John Hume, leader of the Social Democratic and Labour Party, which speaks for most Catholics in Northern Ireland, made an impassioned plea to the IRA to stop killing.

"The Irish people are telling the IRA in the clearest possible terms... if you believe in the people of Ireland, whose flag you wrap around you, then you will listen to them and lay down your arms," Mr. Hume told BBC Radio Ulster.

"That is the sort of decision that is now needed for the future of all our people, and my appeal is direct and simple — lay down your arms now."

The four construction workers were ambushed by the Ulster Freedom Fighters. The UFF and the Ulster Volunteer Force, who fashion themselves as "loyalists" to the British crown, have been responsible for the largest share of the 24 deaths in Northern Ireland this year.

Security was tight at the funeral of James Kelly, a 25-year-old bachelor whom the IRA claimed as a member.

The Auxiliary Bishop of Derry, Dr. Francis Lagan, said at the funeral of James McKenna, a 52-year-old father of four, that the mainly Protestant town of Castlerock was sickened by the killings.

COLUMN

Puppy starts blaze at flat, leaves man homeless

WEST BROMWICH, England (R) — A puppy playing with fire left his owner homeless Saturday. Jack Russell terrier Sam found a box of matches while his master, retired labourer Ray Hobley, was out of his flat. "We believe the puppy chewed through a box of matches, played with the matches and caused friction which started the fire," said Peter Smith, station officer at the West Bromwich Fire Station in central England. Firefighters battled through thick smoke to find the pup behind the refrigerator in the kitchen. They put out the blaze and cared for the little dog until Hobley, 62, returned.

Polish alcohol use up 40% from 1989

WARSAW (R) — Alcohol consumption in Poland has risen by 40 per cent since the collapse of communism three years ago, Polish News Agency (PAP) said Saturday. In 1989, Poles drank the equivalent of seven litres of pure spirit a head on average, while last year average annual consumption had risen to 10.5 litres, PAP said, quoting Ministry of Health alcohol specialist Dr. Jerzy Melibroda. There are around one million adult alcoholics in Poland, and 2-3 million adults are constant drinkers, although they are not yet dependent on drink, he said. Teenage drinking has more than doubled in the last three years, although young appear to prefer beer to vodka, Poland's traditional favourite drink. Beer consumption has risen threefold in the past three years. But drinking at work, a widespread habit under Communist rule, has dropped significantly, due largely, the minister believes, to a fear of redundancy.

Chinese snap up snake snacks

PEKING (R) — Chinese gourmands are munching through at least 10 tonnes of snake meat each day in Guangzhou and new snake markets are opening all the time to keep up with demand, the China Daily said Sunday. "Snake dishes have shivered out of the big hotels and into street snack stands and family dining rooms around the city," the official daily said. "Housewives can buy snakes in the city's large agricultural market now to slake the appetites of their husbands and children." Daily turnover in the largest snake market in Guangzhou, capital of booming Guangdong province in southern China, tops 10 tonnes, the official daily said.

What's in a name? Sumo stars keep changing theirs

TOKYO (R) — Up-and-coming sumo star Wakabanada wrote his name in the record books Sunday, and immediately made plans to change it. When he next enters the ring in May, the baby-faced 22-year-old who has just won the Osaka Spring Tournament with a day to spare will be known as "wakanobana." Like cherubic younger brother Takahanada, who restyled himself "Takanobana" in January after winning promotion to the rank of champion, Waka's gesture following his first tournament win marks a coming of age in Japan's ancient sport. In sumo, leading figures often take a new name when they achieve new distinction. Within this tradition-bound world it is all considered quite normal, but for foreigners coming late to the sport it can sow confusion. For years, perhaps the only sumo wrestler known abroad was Chiyonofuji, whose classical style and quiet dignity made him a quintessential grand champion, one of the sport's "living gods." On his retirement in 1991, the great man severed his sumo topknot and discarded his old name too. Now the head of a stable of wrestlers, he is known as Kokonoe. The Hanada family is perhaps the best example of how bewildering these name changes can be. Waka and Taka (born Masaru and Koji Hanada) are the sons and nephews of two sumo greats known for part of their ring careers as... Takahanada and Wakanobana. Uncle Wakanobana retired and became a stablemaster, taking the name Fujiyama. Father Takahanada quit, headed another stable and became Fujishima. This year Fotagoyama finally gave up his stable on reaching the age of 65, agreeing to merge it with that of Fujishima. The two men then exchanged names.